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THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary
(Teton Village, Wyoming)

For Immediate Release

August 17, 1995

PRESS BRIEFING
BY GINNY TERZANO

Sojourner Inn
Teton Village, Wyoming

11:40 A.M. MDT

Q This better be good. (Laughter.)

Q Is there a lot of McCurry's mind? Is that why you were on the phone for so long?

MS. TERZANO: No, I wanted to see the first tee-off over at the golf course.

Q How was it?

MS. TERZANO: I think he did a nice job. I told you yesterday I'm not the golf expert.

Q Either is he.

MS. TERZANO: Mr. Clinton? Mark Knoller, why are you so surly this morning? I'm sorry for being so late.

We have just a couple things. As you all know, hopefully, we put out a statement on China this morning that you all should have received, and it's in the back in the press office.

In addition, I'd just like to point out that Secretary Shalala today is sending a letter to all the governors, Democrat and Republican, on the fast-track welfare reform demonstration application process. When the President spoke to the National Governors in Burlington a couple of weeks ago, he announced the new fast track demonstration initiative, and she is releasing a simplified application process that will allow the states to submit welfare demonstrations and obtain the approval within 30 days. This is something that the President, as you know, has a lot of interest in and has made this a high priority on his check list.

We will have a statement by the President about welfare where he urges Congress when they return after their recess to put welfare reform on the top of their agenda and to send the President a tough bipartisan bill that builds on the progress that we've made already. There is still a lot of work to do before we get a final welfare bill passed. It is important to the American public and he encourages Congress to take this up right away.

Q When exactly --

MS. TERZANO: As soon as this briefing is over. Also, HHS -- Melissa Skofield, who is the Public Affairs Director over at HHS and is quite an expert on this issue, is available for your reporters back in Washington on all of the technical aspects. We will give you a fact sheet on it as well if you need guidance, but this is pretty much ready to go out.

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guidance, but this is pretty much ready to go out.

And that's it. I'll take any questions.

Q Ginny, can I ask about China? The list of the U.S. problems with China seems to be growing and growing -- the latest example, of course, the test today. Does this screw the pooch, so to say, on the Hillary Clinton trip?

MS. TERZANO: Does it what? (Laughter.)

Q And what does it say about U.S. influence in any way with China so far?

Q It was an animal metaphor he used. (Laughter.)

MS. TERZANO: As the statement indicated, we regret the test that took place that the Chinese made yesterday. However, it does not have any impact on the decision-making process as to whether Mrs. Clinton will travel to China as honorary chair of the women's conference. There are a number of issues that are being looked at as the decision is being weighed, but this does not have a -- this will not have an impact on that decision-making process.

Q Why is that a factor, Ginny?

MS. TERZANO: As you know, Mr. Tarnoff is in China -- or is representing the United States on China. We have diplomatic measures that are moving forward, and there are a number of issues that are being discussed on Mrs. Clinton's possible trip as honorary chair to the conference. And those are issues that are being weighed internally through the appropriate officials, and once a decision is made we will announce it.

Q What are some of those factors, Ginny?

Q Yes.

MS. TERZANO: There are several issues and they are internal discussions, they are delicate issues in many cases and it would not be appropriate to elaborate on them publicly.

Q -- yesterday were saying that the internal of a humanitarian thing was not necessarily connected to this trip. Now the testing is not necessarily -- what is connected to the trip, anything?

MS. TERZANO: There are -- Mike is right on that, and there are various concerns and issues that the White House and State Department and other officials are discussing and talking about, and we are doing so in a very measured manner and will continue to do so.

Q What are the arguments in favor of having her go to China?

MS. TERZANO: I think that that is something that once a decision is made, the White House will be more than willing to discuss publicly. This is an important conference that has taken place annually, that addresses women's issues on a global level, and Mrs. Clinton, who has a genuine and personal interest in these issues, is someone who has been asked to travel to China as the honorary chair. And this is

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something that we are still discussing and deciding on.

Q Is she dealing with this in any way by phone with people in Washington?

MS. TERZANO: Is who dealing --

Q Is she involved in the discussions by phone?

MS. TERZANO: I don't know the answer to that.

Q Has she been, do you know, previously?

MS. TERZANO: She has had meetings and discussions with officials about a possible trip to China, yes.

Q Do you know when a decision might come?

MS. TERZANO: No, I don't. I think, as Mike has said on several occasions, before the conference begins.

Q Back to the test, they tested on May 16th, and the White House issued a similar statement expressing regret. Later, I think in June or so, they tested a road mobile ICBM; now this test. Each time the administration has expressed regret. What influence does the administration have on their arms program?

MS. TERZANO: We have diplomatic measures that are in place and are moving forward in our discussions with Chinese officials. We issued a statement earlier today, as you know, by Mr. McCurry, and that is all that we are going to say on these tests at this time. I have nothing else to elaborate on.

Q Yes, but the President's remarks of last Friday in hoping, in trying to get everyone to accept the zero option, doesn't this sort of fly in his face?

MS. TERZANO: The statement today that was issued is very clear. We regret the test, and we have serious concerns about it. But this is -- but as I've already indicated, we have diplomatic measures that are in place and that are moving forward, and we are working in a measured manner as we not only look at the test that took place by the Chinese government yesterday -- today -- but with other issues as well.

Q Ginny, how are they moving forward?

MS. TERZANO: With Mr. Tarnoff, who is representing the United States.

Q If they continue to do this a week after the President called for zero program and for a ratification of the treaty, it's clearly a snub. So how can diplomatic relations be moving forward if they seem to be kicking the administration?

MS. TERZANO: We were very clear in our statement today what the United States' position is on the Chinese government doing these tests. It was a well-prepared test; I think it was not completely unexpected by the United States government. And our position and our concerns about this test were stated earlier today.

Q Ginny, what is Tarnoff doing? You mentioned him twice now. Is he there or talking to Chinese officials or --

MS. TERZANO: No, no, he's not in China, but he is working with -- he is our diplomatic liaison, my

understanding, with the Chinese.

Q So then, talking about something moving forward, what exactly are you talking about? You said moving forward -- you're giving the impression that progress is being made and we don't see any indication of that at all.

MS. TERZANO: Sometimes there are discussions that need to be had that are not public, and as we look at the women's conference and Mrs. Clinton possibly attending the conference as honorary chair, there are certain issues that are being discussed and weighed, as we have reiterated on several occasions. We have nothing else to say or further more to say at this time.

Q Do you know if the First Lady's going to China is actually being raised directly with the Chinese as part of this entire --

MS. TERZANO: I don't know the answer to that. I will try to find out for you, but I don't know the answer.

Q Doesn't this whole nuclear testing question beg the point that if everyone conducts all the tests they want and then they sign up with the zero option, why bother with the zero option? If everyone -- the French are conducting their tests, the Chinese are conducting their tests. Why doesn't everybody do all they want and then go for a zero option? Because that looks like what they're doing.

MS. TERZANO: The President in his statement -- I believe it was on Friday of last week, he talked about nuclear test ban -- he made very clear what the United States' position is on this, and I've nothing further to elaborate on at this time.

Q We're just out there by ourselves right now.

MS. TERZANO: Any other questions?

Q Ginny, on Iraq, anything -- what movements are there that we know about and what do we think about them?

MS. TERZANO: There's been no change with Iraq at this time. The Pentagon gave an informational briefing earlier today, but to point out something that they said -- the United States has not put U.S. troops on alert and there is no imminent deployment expected. But there's no new information or nothing further to report on the situation.

Q Is the administration trying to convince Jordan to break its relations towards Iraq?

MS. TERZANO: To break its relations?

Q With Iraq -- as The Washington Post reports today.

MS. TERZANO: If you don't mind if I can get back to you on that. I don't know the answer, I'd like to just double-check that for you.

Q Is the President being kept up to date on --

MS. TERZANO: Oh, certainly. Yes. He has,

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as I told you yesterday, he has an NSC advisor who is here; he receives a daily briefing; and he also talks to senior officials back in Washington. And he is fully updated.

Q Does he have anything on either the China thing or the latest Iraq --

MS. TERZANO: We issued a statement on China earlier this morning by the Press Secretary.

Q I know, but did you talk to him earlier today?

MS. TERZANO: I did, and we have nothing further to add on China.

Q What about Iraq?

MS. TERZANO: We have nothing further to add on -- the President addressed this in his news conference last week that he had with you all, and we have nothing further to add from his comments of last Thursday. There is no new information and we have not put U.S. troops on alert.

Q Okay, well, what's he doing, what does he plan to do, and what is Hillary doing while he's doing golfing?

MS. TERZANO: The President is thoroughly enjoying himself. He is, as he said, trying to indulge as much as possible in golf prior to Chelsea arriving tomorrow. He is working very hard at improving his golf game, as you all know. And he's out on the course again today. We don't know how many holes he is going to play, but he's slotted for 18 at this time and is having a good time out there.

He commented about how magnificent the view is from not only the residence, but from the golf course, and how fresh the air is. And you can already tell that after being here just 48 hours, he is much more relaxed and rested since leaving Washington. But he very much is focusing his attention on golf over the next day.

Q What's the First Lady doing?

MS. TERZANO: She has spent most of her time at the residence writing. As you know, she writes a column and she has a book coming out. And so she is working on that.

Q Ginny, has the President had any more conversations with Senator Bradley? And how does the White House view the prospect of a Bradley independent candidacy?

MS. TERZANO: Has he talked to Senator Bradley? Oh, has he talked to him further?

Q Yes.

MS. TERZANO: No. He talked to him, as you all know, yesterday morning prior to the Senator's announcement. The President called Senator Bradley. They had a good conversation. They did not talk about an independent presidential run. They primarily talked about Senator Bradley's decision and about the Democratic Party and Senator Bradley's announcement and his frustration with -- overall with politics that he expressed in his press conference.

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I think what we are seeing in Senator Bradley's comments from this morning from news interviews, and even in his remarks yesterday, this is just a general frustration with politics in this day and age, and I think that that frustration tends to be felt by a lot of people inside and outside of politics. And he's conveying that frustration.

He is a good Democrat and a strong leader within this party. He is in line with the Democratic Party on important issues, such as crime and trade and a balanced budget. And I think in the end you are going to see Senator Bradley remain a good, strong Democrat and a leader within this party.

Q Ginny, though, has he had -- has this prompted any renewed discussions within the White House political apparatus between the President, say, Morris or Panetta or anybody else about what this means for 1996?

MS. TERZANO: No. As we look towards 1996

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Q About New Jersey, about anything.

MS. TERZANO: As we look towards 1996, we are prepared for a primary challenge. We don't expect anyone is going to challenge the President in the primaries, and we are geared up for an independent candidate in the general election. And it is too far away to say whether anyone, whether it be -- it is too far to say whether any independent candidate will get into the race. But these are two issues that the political folks back at the White House and at the campaign office are working on and have been addressing over the last couple of months.

But, as I said, we don't expect a primary challenge, and it's too far away for the general election. But I think Senator Bradley is merely conveying his frustration that he noted yesterday in his remarks.

And I think, in the end, you are going to see him actively campaigning on behalf of other Democrats across this country because his core values are the values of this party which is helping working class Americans get more economic opportunity, providing more tax fairness.

Q Ginny, how do you know he's going to campaign for Democrats when he today he's leaving open a possible independent bid?

MS. TERZANO: What I just said is, in the end, I think you will see Senator Bradley campaigning on behalf of the party and Democratic candidates.

Q Do you have knowledge of that? Has he said something to the President or did this come up in their talk yesterday?

MS. TERZANO: No. This is my gut instincts from someone who has worked in politics for a little bit in Washington and as someone who has greatly admired Senator Bradley. I mean, he is someone who has very strong convictions on a number of important issues that directly impact working people.

And if you look at his voting record over his time in the Congress and during the last two and a

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half years when the President has been in office, he is very much in line with the President on key votes. And as I said, I think in the end you are going to see him actively campaigning for Democrats and the party.

But I'll tell you, the general election is far away. I think he's just merely conveying his general frustration as we all do now and then.

Q He seems to be more than frustrated. He is talking about -- or he is leaving the door open to an independent candidacy and has gone so far as to say that he's talked to Colin Powell. About what, no one knows, but presumably that's --

MS. TERZANO: I would assume -- I cannot speak for Senator Bradley on this and I defer you to his office -- I would assume Senator Bradley has spoken to many people over the last couple of days. I think this was a big personal decision for him and his family, and I think that that's normal for him to talk to many people.

Q Ginny, did the President try to talk him out of it?

MS. TERZANO: No. Not that I'm -- I mean, it was a good conversation just where Senator Bradley told him what he was doing, and the President expressed his personal thoughts about how this would be a loss to the Senate and to the party -- losing him at this time.

Q Is the President going to participate in any way by phone or in any other manner with the DNC summer meeting in New Orleans this week?

MS. TERZANO: He is not. He did a video -- well, he is, but he's not doing it while he's in Jackson Hole. He did a video speech that he taped -- I believe, on the morning we left for Jackson Hole or the day before -- that will be played to the DNC members while they're down there in New Orleans. We have White House officials who have attended the meeting, and so there is a lot of participation among the White House as they gather in New Orleans.

Q Ginny, what's he going to do tonight? Do we know? Have you talked to him about it?

MS. TERZANO: Yes, I did. I don't think he's decided. He said that he, as I told you, planned on golfing today because he wanted to get in as much golf as he could before Chelsea arrived where, afterwards, once she arrives, I think they're going to do more of the outdoor activities like hiking and attend a rodeo.

But I could speculate -- I think there's a good chance that they stay at home and have dinner again -- the President and Mrs. Clinton. After all, it's their vacation.

Q Have they had anybody in?

MS. TERZANO: No. He's golfing today, as a matter of fact, with Jim Wolfensohn who is with the World Bank. And he is going to have one of your colleagues golf with him shortly.

Q Who's that?

Q Nichols?

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MS. TERZANO: Gotcha.

Q He had a Clinton-Gore T-shirt on yesterday, so --

Q What does that mean to be geared up for an independent candidacy?

Q Wait, is he golfing with him or caddying for him? Which is it? (Laughter.)

MS. TERZANO: I think Mr. Nichols is a good golfer, isn't he? He's been telling me all about it.

Q I think Mr. Nichols has just crossed the line. (Laughter.)

Q Ginny, will there be any coverage of the birthday celebration?

Q We need to have a serious discussion with Mr. Bill.

MS. TERZANO: What birthday celebration? It's a surprise.

Q He doesn't know there's going to be a birthday --

MS. TERZANO: No.

Q Now, is this pooled? Is Bill pooled? Does he understand his obligations to the rest of us?

MS. TERZANO: I didn't have that conversation with him.

Q Get him on the phone. We'll have that conversation with him. (Laughter.)

Q Can you give us any details on how this golf game with Bill came about? What's the quid pro quo here?

Q Like did Bill ask?

MS. TERZANO: No, the President asked. The President said, "Are there any reporters out there who play golf?" And I laughed and said, "Oh, yes." He said, "Do you think they would like to play?" And I said, "I think they would love to."

Q You should have taken a poll to see how many of us actually play golf.

MS. TERZANO: I did a quick name on the top of my head. And we are here for a long time so I think there will be more opportunities.

Q Ginny, John was asking, what does it mean to be geared up for an independent candidacy? I mean, you're sort of prepared if it happens?

MS. TERZANO: Certainly. I think any time you run for office, whether it is on the local level or the nation level, you have to have a game plan and a strategy. And that is the case with the Clinton-Gore reelection campaign for 1996. You have to look at where you can best spend your resources. And as we begin to gear up for the 1996 campaign, we are looking at all of the fault lines that we may have to cross between now and November of 1996 and look at how best we can wage a national campaign to see the President

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and the Vice President reelected.

Q Do you think it would help you if there was an independent candidate? Would it help the President's chances?

MS. TERZANO: I think what would -- I really don't have an answer to that. I mean, the President has a very strong record to run on in 1996, which he will do, in addressing the American public on what he has done over the last two and a half years on a number of issues, such as creating more jobs, lowering the deficit, trying to balance the budget, and get political reform and welfare reform passed. And his eye is very much on focusing on the issues that are important to the American people, and he will try to convey that throughout the 1996 campaign.

Q Ginny, the Jackson Hole focus group on Medicare is going to meet on the 24th, which I think is next Thursday. Would Mrs. Clinton attend that, an issues she's involved in?

MS. TERZANO: I don't believe there are any plans for that, and I will double check for you.

Someone yesterday asked me about -- I think a couple of you asked me yesterday about books the President was reading, and he said that he brought several books with him. He has not had a lot of time to do reading. As you know, he had a very strenuous day yesterday where he was focused on other issues.

But some of the books he has brought along with him are Pat Conroy's new book, Beach Music; William Manchester, Goodbye Darkness; Stein and, I want to say, Fast, New Illustrated Guide to the American Economy --

Q Good summertime reading. (Laughter.)

Q Are there good pictures?

Q That's to prop the door open with, right?

MS. TERZANO: I'm going to spell this last name as best as I can. Skowronek -- that's the last name.

Q Can you repeat that?

MS. TERZANO: Skowronek, and the book is The Politics Presidents Make; Hamisch McRae, The World in 2020; Varmus Weinberg, Genes and the Biology of Cancer. And he also said he had a couple of detective novels as well, which I don't have the names of.

Q But the other stuff is such light reading.

MS. TERZANO: Excuse me. And he hopes to read these books on his vacation, but --

Q If it rains.

MS. TERZANO: Well.

Q Could you repeat the authors of The New Illustrated Guide?

MS. TERZANO: Stein and, it looks like Fast.

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It's something you may have to look up.

Q Have you read that book yourself, Ginny?

MS. TERZANO: No, but Leon has.

Q Thanks, Ginny.

MS. TERZANO: The radio address, for your planning purposes, is most likely going to be pre-taped tomorrow morning which we will then have an embargoed text for you all.

Q Subject?

MS. TERZANO: I do not have a subject for you yet.

Q Will be have an audience?

MS. TERZANO: No.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END

12:08 P.M. MDT

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

August 16, 1995

PRESS BRIEFING
BY GINNY TERZANOThe Sojourner
Jackson Hole, Wyoming

10:45 A.M. MDT

MS. TERZANO: I have absolutely nothing to say. Kathy just passed out a pool report to give you an update on the President and his morning at the golf course. And I will take questions.

Q Does the White House have any reaction to Bradley?

MS. TERZANO: We will have a statement by the President. Just before I came out here I called Senator Bradley's office, and he had not yet formally made the announcement. So we'll wait to do the actual statement when that happens.

Q Has the President spoken with him?

MS. TERZANO: It is my understanding that they have not spoken. The President is aware of Senator Bradley's decision and he has talked to Leon Panetta about this. And certainly, he thinks that this is a great loss to the United States Senate, the people of New Jersey. Senator Bradley has long been a voice of reason on a number of issues ranging from race to civility to tax fairness, and will be greatly missed.

Q Ginny, when's Chelsea getting here and is she in Alaska?

MS. TERZANO: It's my understanding she is here on Friday. She arrives on Friday, and I believe she's in Alaska, although I don't know that for sure. I'll double-check on that.

Q If they do any hunting -- not hunting -- if they do any camping or horseback riding or something like that, are they going to do it after she gets here? Is he going to be pretty light --

MS. TERZANO: I think we can expect this week to be fairly relaxing and low-key. As you know, the President likes to play golf and is playing golf and will probably do that tomorrow as well. But I think some of the more strenuous activities will probably be -- will probably wait until Chelsea gets here. But I think all of us sort of have to be patient and we'll see.

We don't have any specifics on what they're going to do yet, either. But we'll certainly let you know and give you as much notice as possible.

Q Is he keeping up with the hurricane?

MS. TERZANO: He is. Director Witt has talked to Leon Panetta and other White House officials. Leon Panetta is regularly updating the President on various administration activities and news, including the hurricane. And Director Witt has talked to the Governor of North Carolina, the Governor of Virginia. He's talked to Senators Warner and Robb. He's also

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talked to state emergency management people in the state of North Carolina and Virginia. They have already prepositioned supplies and resources into the state in case it is necessary to activate a full emergency system once the storm hits. So Director Witt has talked to the White House on a regular basis over the last couple of days and is working very closely with state and local officials.

Q I'm sorry, Ginny, who did you just say talked to Warner and Robb?

MS. TERZANO: Witt.

Q Apparently, Mrs. Wu, Harry Wu's wife, is saying that she wrote a letter to Mrs. Clinton urging her not to go to China but has not received any reply. Do you know anything about that?

MS. TERZANO: Let me just double-check one thing. It was my understanding, and I may be wrong, I thought the letter was written to the President. It could be to the President and Mrs. Clinton. So let me clarify that for you and I'll post the answer back on our bulletin board for you on that. But we did receive a letter from Mrs. Wu. It was very personal and she stated many of the things that she relayed to Mr. Lake when she met with him earlier. But it was a very personal letter and the White House has received it and we appreciate her comments.

Q Will there be an answer from the President to Mrs. Wu?

MS. TERZANO: I would -- I believe we will respond. I don't know if we have formally responded in a letter yet, and I'll double-check for you.

Q Can you characterize it in any way, Ginny? Is she asking for more pressure to help for him to be released or --

MS. TERZANO: I have not seen the letter or read the letter, so I would not like to characterize it. In talking to Mike this morning he did say that it was very personal in nature, talking about her husband, and that she did reiterate, as I just said, many of the comments and points that she made to Mr. Lake earlier in the meeting she had with him.

Q When did you get the letter?

Q When will this final decision --

MS. TERZANO: I don't know; I'll find out for you.

Q When do you think the final decision now will be made?

MS. TERZANO: We are still looking at the issue of Mrs. Clinton traveling to China as honorary chair of the woman conference, and no decisions have been made yet and we have nothing more to add at this point.

Q Was she asking in this letter for Mrs. Clinton not to go to China?

MS. TERZANO: I can't characterize the letter any further than what I just said, one, without seeing it, and it was a personal letter to the President and-or the First Lady and I'm not sure that we will characterize it much more than what we've just done.

Q I'm sorry, where did the letter come from, Ginny?

MS. TERZANO: Mrs. Wu.

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Q Why did the President arrive in a suit?
(Laughter.) I'm serious.

MS. TERZANO: Well, when we left Washington he had meetings at the White House and he -- that's how he had left. And I think he just was on the plane and immediately went into a relaxed mode. I know that he pulled out a book and felt comfortable. He took his jacket off. When he came back and talked to the press he had his jacket off. But I think he was just comfortable with it and probably didn't think much about it.

Q Not enough room to change --

MS. TERZANO: Yes, also it was the different airplane. It was the smaller airplane and he didn't have the luxury of going into his big cabin.

Q Is that the Pat Conway book we've heard so much about --

MS. TERZANO: I don't know if he was reading that book, but he did bring it with him. But I just think he didn't think much about it.

Q In terms of Senator Bradley, do you think that all you'll be doing is putting out a written statement, or might the President say something on camera?

MS. TERZANO: We'll have a written statement.

Q What did they do last night?

MS. TERZANO: I think they relaxed at their home and had a nice quiet evening.

Q Any guests?

MS. TERZANO: Not that I know of.

Q The same for tonight, probably?

MS. TERZANO: I don't know the answer to that.

Q Do you know what the plans are for the birthday party?

MS. TERZANO: No. And as the day approaches we will have more information.

Q The Rockefellers are not here, right?

MS. TERZANO: No, they are not here.

Q Are they coming out --

MS. TERZANO: I do not believe that they're coming. Mr. Rockefeller was at the White House, as you all know, for the party that the staff put together for the President and he kindly turned over all of his keys to the President and the First Lady, giving us the indication that he would be in Washington.

Q -- is what, Tuesday?

MS. TERZANO: Thursday.

Q You don't know the titles of any of the books he's got, do you?

MS. TERZANO: No. I'll find out for you. I'll try to find out for you.

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Q Has he read any Conroy books, any others?

MS. TERZANO: He did bring Beach Music with him. I don't know if he started that book or not.

Q What else do you know of?

MS. TERZANO: We don't know, but I'll try to find out for you.

Q Who's cooking for them? Did they bring a chef?

MS. TERZANO: No, they didn't bring their --

Q -- travel for them?

MS. TERZANO: No, not that I know of. I'll double-check for you. I'll call Neil Lattimore. But I don't believe he travels.

Q For the sake of the pool can you please explain the difference between a moose and an elk? (Laughter.)

MS. TERZANO: I would rather have either AP or Reuters do that because they devoured elk and moose last night. So they might know better than me. Mr. McKee? Mr. Williams? Are you from Wyoming?

Q -- the elk lodges every Thursday and Friday. (Laughter.)

Q Might they really go camping, and if so, in a park or where?

MS. TERZANO: I don't like to take Mike McCurry's name in vain when he's not here to defend himself, but I think Mike would love for them to go camping. (Laughter.) I don't know. I haven't had that conversation with them, and I don't think they've made any firm decisions on what their fun activities are going to be. And I think they also want to talk to Chelsea about what they plan to do.

Q Is the Mrs. hanging out at the house while he's playing golf?

MS. TERZANO: I don't know the answer to that. They, as the President indicated to the pool yesterday on the plane, he very much wants to just relax and have a pleasant, quiet time. And I think the first few days, both Mrs. Clinton and the President are going to just try to be as relaxing as possible -- probably more around the residence than out and about and in the town. But I do not know what she did this morning.

Q When she moves, will we know?

MS. TERZANO: At times. (Laughter.)

Q So if she goes into town --

MS. TERZANO: Yes. I mean, at times.

Q Do you talk to the President at all?

MS. TERZANO: I have not talked to him today, but I will touch base with him.

Q You did a very good job.

MS. TERZANO: Thank you. It was easy.

Q Oh, Ginny, just one more thing.

MS. TERZANO: Of course, Jill.

Q He's getting his morning NSC briefings?

MS. TERZANO: Yes. He is updated daily on NSC issues. We have an NSC staff person traveling with us, and the updates are primarily on paper. And if necessary, there will be phone conversations, or Andrew Sens will talk to him directly. But he is being updated directly.

Q But he's talking to Panetta?

MS. TERZANO: Yes. And Leon is updating him regularly on overall issues, including national security issues.

Q Ginny, when did this letter come for Mrs. Clinton?

MS. TERZANO: I don't know. What I'm going to do is just double-check if it was to Mrs. Clinton or the President or both of them and when the letter was received. And I will post that answer in the press office for you.

Q -- when is the Bradley's statement?

MS. TERZANO: As soon as Senator Bradley finishes making his announcement, which will be soon if it's not done already.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END

10:55 A.M. MDT

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

August 14, 1995

PRESS BRIEFING
BY MIKE MCCURRY

The Briefing Room

1:10 P.M. EDT

MR. MCCURRY: The President today -- a couple of items here -- the President today named Donald A. Baer as Assistant to the President and Director of Communications to the President of the United States. Mr. Baer succeeds Mark D. Gearan, who was confirmed by the United States Senate last week to be Director of the Peace Corps, an event that caused great tumult here at the White House as person after person rushed to wish Mr. Gearan well in his new position.

I deny -- there's a rumor going around that we have -- that the President is announcing today that the office of Peace Corps is being elevated to Cabinet rank. (Laughter.) I specifically deny that.

Mr. Baer is currently the Assistant to the President for Speechwriting. As many of you know, he joined the White House staff in April of 1994 as Deputy Assistant to the President for Speechwriting and Research, and prior to coming to the White House he served seven years at U.S. News and World Report, a distinguished news organization, first as a reporter covering the Justice Department, the White House and national politics, and then as assistant managing editor. Before moving to Washington in 1987, he was a magazine writer and a lawyer in New York City, something that we will not hold against him.

Item the second, 13 state attorneys general have issued a statement in support of the President's announcement of restricting tobacco sales to youth. They say in their statement, as the chief law enforcement officers of our respective states, we applaud President Clinton's proposals to help prevent another generation of American kids from dying tobacco-related diseases. Good news. Support --

Q Democrats or Republicans?

MR. MCCURRY: Two Republicans on the list of 13.

Q Item the third -- we're cleaning out the in-box here. Today the Clinton administration is granting waivers to two more states, Maryland and Wisconsin, for welfare reform experiments. The administration has now given two-thirds of the states freedom from federal rules to implement their own welfare reforms. As the President indicated, welfare reform will continue while Congress dithers.

Q Does doing Wisconsin add a state to that list? Because, I mean, haven't they gotten the waivers before --

MR. MCCURRY: This is the third welfare reform waiver the Clinton administration has approved for Wisconsin. There are 33

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states total. But now numerous specific experiments that have been authorized by the administration, they examine different aspects of welfare reform. Sometimes states will come in after initiating something in time for limited assistance, or work requirements, or for child support enforcement, or for new measures on parental responsibility -- they'll come in with some new ideas they want to advance. And the President is anxious and, as he indicated, flexible in giving states the type of authority they need to proceed with these experiments.

Q Was that 33 waivers or 33 states?

MR. MCCURRY: Thirty-three states, and I believe the total waivers is up 40-plus something. We can get you that exact number.

Q Where are you putting out details of this? Here?

MR. MCCURRY: Department of Health and Human Services has got the full details on both states waivers. So you guys can take a pass on it if you so choose. But I wanted to point that out because I think it's interesting news.

Okay, that's mine. What's yours?

Q Does the President support changing the peacekeeping operation -- or transferring it to a NATO run operation rather than the U.N.?

MR. MCCURRY: The U.N. peacekeeping mission in Bosnia, in former Yugoslavia?

Q Yes.

MR. MCCURRY: The President supports the existing mandate for the U.N. mission in Bosnia. We believe it's an important one. It's keeping people alive and helping to curb the conflict. And the work that we are doing diplomatically is designed to strengthen the existing U.N. mission.

Q Has he heard from Lake yet or is coming --

MR. MCCURRY: He's been getting regular reports from the Deputy National Security Advisor, who's in touch with Mr. Lake. Mr. Lake's probably somewhere over the pond as we talk and will report in to the President later today or tomorrow morning.

Q There has been some reaction from over there. I think President Izetbegovic says no way he'll give up Gorazde. Can you respond to that?

MR. MCCURRY: I don't think it was part of any presentation made by Mr. Lake that demanded giving up Gorazde.

Q Well, there was talk of a trade.

MR. MCCURRY: The parties will be meeting very shortly with Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs Richard Holbrooke, who will go in some greater detail through the various ideas we have been developing in contact with our allies and friends as a result of Mr. Lake's mission.

Q What do you think of the Russian idea to hold an international conference on Bosnia, or the former Yugoslavia?

MR. MCCURRY: We believe that is a constructive idea and, of course, we welcome constructive efforts to bring about a

peace settlement in the Balkans. We'll study the Russian proposal, and I believe, as a result of the meeting between Mr. Lake and Russian Foreign Minister Andrey Kozyrev, the Russian Federation will be looking more closely at some of the ideas we are developing.

Q Have all the parties agreed to see Holbrooke -- all the warring parties?

MR. MCCURRY: I don't know if there's any official confirmation from all three, but we do expect him to see officials in all three capitals -- Zagreb, Sarajevo, and Belgrade.

Q Are you encouraged by what you've heard so far from Lake's mission?

MR. MCCURRY: We are encouraged that the international community seems to be coming together around an effort to stimulate the diplomatic dialogue that could bring the conflict to an end. We remain of the view that negotiation and dialogue by the parties is far preferable to killing each other. And we will be pursuing the ideas that we've developed in recent days, and continuing to press the parties for resolving their differences at the negotiating table.

Q I don't think anybody in the administration said that giving up Gorazde was a demand of the United States, but I do believe that several people have said that that was one possible scramblings of the map to try to reach a diplomatic solution. Is there, in fact -- I mean, how would you describe this map proposal? Is it a set of a variety of different ideas on reaction to the military situation on the ground?

MR. MCCURRY: The only map, per se, that is before the parties is the map developed as a result of the Contact Group deliberations, reflected in their proposal. And as we've said repeatedly, adjustments in that proposal would have to be made by the parties themselves.

Q Aren't you proposing some adjustments for them to look at? Of course they have to make them.

MR. MCCURRY: We've explored, as I've told you, several ideas with our allies and friends, and will now be presenting those ideas to the parties.

Q That's the '94 plan, last year's Contact Group?

MR. MCCURRY: Last year's -- August '94 Contact Group proposal.

Q Some of the allies are saying that the U.S., at this point, seems more committed to the entire process? Would you say that that's the case?

MR. MCCURRY: I'm sorry, I missed --

Q Some of our allies are saying that suddenly the U.S. seems more committed to being involved and finding a solution. Is that the case?

MR. MCCURRY: I'd say that based on the President's direction, we are taking steps to try to stimulate the dialogue and accelerate the dialogue to bring about an end to the conflict, if that is in fact possible.

Q What specifics might cause them to say that?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, I'm not going to pretend to try to get into the specifics of what are obviously sensitive discussions that will have to be held with the parties.

Q Mike, what is the overall climate -- political or otherwise -- encourages you to think that there's some possibility of diplomatic settlement down the road?

MR. MCCURRY: It's a combination of factors that have changed the environment and the landscape in Bosnia -- the fighting; the significant losses by both sides; the sense that both sides are nearly exhausting themselves in a conflict that has now raged on for far too long.

Q What would -- if the veto were overridden, or if the arms embargo was lifted on the Bosnian government, which seems to be a last chance, would the President support Dole and Helms in wanting to give \$100 million to the Bosnian government for arms?

MR. MCCURRY: We remain of the view that unilaterally lifting the arms embargo is a bad idea. But as we have repeatedly said, unilaterally lifting the arms embargo would thrust the United States in a position where we would bear unilateral responsibility for the consequences of lifting the arms embargo. One of those consequences we've suggested in the past would be taking on the responsibility of paying for the training, paying for the arms, being much more aggressive in inserting U.S. personnel into the theater to help protect the Bosnian Muslims as they became better equipped to deal with aggression by the Bosnian Serbs.

In that sense, the proposal by Senator Dole and Senator Helms to spend \$100 million extra in providing arms is at least coherent in the logic that goes with unilaterally lifting the arms embargo. It represents the first of what would likely be many future steps that would further Americanize the conflict. And in that sense, both Senator Dole and Senator Helms are being honest in telling the American people that we will pay for and very likely sacrifice some of our treasure, if not lives, in furtherance of the policy that Congress has now adopted.

Q Isn't it correct to say that you're proposing some revisions to the 1994 Contact Group map?

MR. MCCURRY: It's clear that we're suggesting specific new ideas that could help break an impasse. The impasse arises because the Bosnian government has accepted the Contact Group proposal as a basis for a settlement; the Bosnian Serbs have not.

Q When you say specific new ideas, you're talking about rearrangements in the amount of territory given to each --

MR. MCCURRY: I'm being very careful to not describe the specific new ideas, as you can tell.

Q -- the basic structure of this new deal you're having in mind, basically --

MR. MCCURRY: Basically, it involves a combination of incentives and disincentives for the parties to encourage them to reach a peace settlement.

Q What are the disincentives?

Q Bombing?

MR. MCCURRY: I'm not going to get into the specifics. Asked and answered.

Q Is Mr. Deutch briefing the President on the situation in Iraq today and what you may have learned from the defectors?

MR. MCCURRY: As I indicated to some of you earlier, he's getting together with the Director of Central Intelligence today. He plans to do that on a regular basis and this was good occasion before the President departs for his vacation to see the Director of Central Intelligence. He'll also be seeing the Secretary of State later on today. And he may, depending on Mr. Lake's travel schedule, see the National Security Advisor, as well.

Q I don't think you answered that question, Michael.

MR. MCCURRY: I sure didn't. I don't talk about intelligence briefings the President gets.

Q The actual map on the ground, if you look at what's happening in Bosnia, the groups -- the ethnic groups now are coalescing in different spots in, let's say, a cleaner fashion. You have Serbs moving to Serbia and Croats in one area. What is the U.S. position overall on how the realistic map has worked and would it make it, even though it may be distasteful, would it be easier to work toward a peaceful --

MR. MCCURRY: I cannot give you a real politic analysis of the situation on the ground. Your statement is roughly correct, but due to absolutely tragic and horrible consequences, there are areas that Serbs now occupy because they've been ethnically cleansed of Muslims. By no means is that a neat solution to what is a tragedy, an unspeakable tragedy. But the question is there are steps going to move forward at this point to bring the fighting to an end so that there's not further tragedy, and obviously, that's what our diplomacy is aimed at doing.

Q Despite your answer to Ann, are you able to say whether the United States is getting substantial information from Jordan about their debriefings of General Kamel --

MR. MCCURRY: I don't have anything to add beyond what I said Friday on that subject. I think I answered it as much as I can answer it on Friday.

Q Are you able to say whether there's been any discussion of granting asylum to any of the Iraqi's in the United States?

MR. MCCURRY: I'm just declining to get into specifics on that. I'm not aware of any requests for asylum and I indicated on Friday that we are in contact with the government of Jordan and do have information concerning the two defectors.

Q If there were information coming from Jordan, would it be going through the CIA to get to the President? Is that the right channels it would go through?

MR. MCCURRY: That's not a good thing for me to speculate on here publicly.

Q Can you say whether or not, generally speaking, that the new proposals that were being offered by Tony Lake involved less territory for the Bosnian Muslim government?

MR. MCCURRY: I can say in general they flow from the Contact Group which remains, we believe, a basis for a future settlement.

Q Does that maintain the 49-51?

MR. MCCURRY: That is -- the formulation of division of territory in the Contact Group proposal was 51-49, and as we always indicated, that could be adjusted by agreement of the parties.

Q Is Mrs. Clinton going to China?

MR. MCCURRY: I do not know.

Q Neither do we.

Q When will the decision be made.

Q Have you asked recently?

MR. MCCURRY: I asked today; I'm not aware that there's been any final decision made today.

Q Is there a deadline for a cutoff?

MR. MCCURRY: Yes. As I indicated, prior to the conference.

Q -- to ask President Clinton to declare child abuse a state of emergency. Has the White House thought about that, and if so, how do you --

MR. MCCURRY: Well, the President is very really concerned about the status of children in America, has talked about it as recently as last Wednesday. Child abuse directed against the young Americans is something that he is deeply troubled by and has worked to combat. And we will certainly look at the proposal that's been made carefully.

Q When you are talking about a window of opportunity, how big is it, until when and where --

MR. MCCURRY: It is really up to the parties to see whether at this point they wish to move into a negotiating track as opposed to attempting to do on the ground through further fighting what thus far they have not been able to achieve at the negotiating table. How long that might last is anybody's guess.

Q Can you give us some idea about what the President's plans are as far as work while he's in Wyoming and as far as liaison in dealing with these foreign policy issues?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, he will have access to all the communications technology that he needs. He's very well equipped when he travels. You've heard White Houses brief on this before, but through the latest marvels of satellite technology he can have confidential and classified briefings with his national security team back here in Washington if that's necessary. I wouldn't rule out that he will need to do that in connection with developments in Bosnia, but we have a very good sense of where the discussions are at this point and a very good sense of what the next steps are as we continue to try to stimulate and invigorate diplomacy.

The President sounded to me like someone who is looking forward to a vacation. There will be a -- Calvin points out there is a National Security Council contact who will be with the President on the trip who can facilitate any briefings that he might need. But the President sounded like someone who was looking forward to vacation. He plans to hike and camp and raft and --

Q Camp?

MR. MCCURRY: Yes.

Q Camp, like how?

MR. MCCURRY: Like camp.

Q Like overnight in a tent?

MR. MCCURRY: Like go pitch a tent with Chelsea and Hillary.

Q Secret Service agents dressed as bears?

MR. MCCURRY: We'll see.

Q Will there be pool coverage?

MR. MCCURRY: He's looking forward to horseback riding. The President reports that since he was young he used to like to visit national parks; in fact, he used to kind of get in the car and go visit some on his own. He hasn't had much of an opportunity to do that as President. In fact, to my recollection he hasn't been able to visit any national park as President, and he's looking forward to doing so. He's taking with him a big stack of books to read, including Pat Conroy's latest novel. And he plans to have a very relaxing time in Wyoming.

Q Is there anybody coming in to talk to him in terms of budget, or is he taking any senior NSC types?

MR. MCCURRY: He's not planning any -- as I am aware right now, and as his schedule now stands, I'm not aware of any briefings or meetings that he plans with any of his staff. We'll have a limited staff operation out there, more designed to take care of you than him.

Q Is he taking up The New York Times on their suggestion today about some environmental work up there?

MR. MCCURRY: The Yellowstone question?

Q Yes.

MR. MCCURRY: He talked about that recently in Billings. He's been fairly briefed on the proposed mining venture, and he remains very supportive of Senator Baucus' plan for an environmental impact statement that would assess what some of the long-term future uses of the area adjacent to the parties should be.

Q Mike, internal elections in Haiti don't seem to be satisfying too many people. How does the White House feel about it?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, we understand that, once again, Haitians were able to vote at sites across the country without fear of violence or intimidation. And that represents a great step forward. The complications that existed with the election before were logistical, primarily logistical.

They seemed to have addressed some of those shortcomings in the vote that took place yesterday. We regret of course that the anticipated turnout was lower than it had been projected. We're also disappointed that more of the competing parties did not participate fully in the reruns or the run-off elections.

Q What kind of -- while he's having all that fun out there, what sort of domestic issues will be on his mind? I know Jill asked this morning if he'd be kept awake nights by this --

MR. MCCURRY: He's going on vacation, Claire. If he's a lucky guy, he won't have a lot of that on his mind. He'll be worried about the budget; he'll be worried about the fact that when he comes back this fall, there will be very complicated discussions with the Congress to try to avert a crisis. But he's going to be on vacation, and he's not going to pretend otherwise. Thankfully, this is an opportunity for him to get away from all of that.

Q What kind of coverage are the reporters going to have? I mean, how much access are they going to be able to see?

MR. MCCURRY: Traditional and customary. (Laughter.)

Q Will there be a pool at the Rockefeller house every day?

MR. MCCURRY: The coverage opportunities will be designed to afford those who are there to cover the President plenty of time for their own relaxation and vacation. (Laughter.)

Q If any bears approach him will they be around?

MR. MCCURRY: Do you have any preferences where the Bosnia negotiations should take place?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, in the immediate future they're taking place in the three capitals -- in Sarajevo, Zagreb, and Belgrade. And that seems reasonable to the United States.

Q When does he leave tomorrow?

Q You're not answering many questions.

MR. MCCURRY: I've heard around midday, but we're going to try to pin that down for the benefit of those of you who have to travel. I'll try to do that later on today.

Q Are you going to brief tomorrow?

MR. MCCURRY: I don't believe so. At the moment, I don't plan to because the President, we hope, will be long gone by the time of our customary briefing. I will, of course, meet with you in the morning early for my last gaggle of the month of August.

Q Who's going out?

MR. MCCURRY: Ms. Terzano, our very capable Deputy Press Secretary, will be there to handle your questions during the period the President is vacating. (Laughter.) And there will be an NSC staff contact person there and some advance people, but beyond that I'm not aware of any other senior staff that are traveling.

Q Mike, what is the status of the conversations about Mrs. Clinton's trip and will any decision be made on that -- about whether or not she should go before she returns, since the conference begins on the 4th of September?

MR. MCCURRY: There will be some decision made on that relatively shortly I'd imagine, just giving the need to put together the logistics of a trip if Mrs. Clinton does, in fact, decide to go. I'm not aware that there have been any final decision made by the First Lady.

Q What's relatively shortly?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, within coming days.

Q Was her plan always to go to Hawaii with the President, or not?

MR. MCCURRY: I'm not certain that I know the answer to that. Do you know? I believe -- I'm told by the noddings of the head over here she had planned to go to Honolulu.

Q Mike, I know you don't want to talk about the train wreck coming, but just one last thing. (Laughter.) Could you tell --

MR. MCCURRY: There's a train wreck -- (laughter) --

Q I know and it's something to look forward to. (Laughter.) And that's why we are -- I wanted to know what's the status of specific planning? What happens if the government --

MR. MCCURRY: Well, the President has met with his economic advisors to look at questions associated with what happens this fall if any number of scenarios take place -- if you don't have appropriations bills in place and you need continuing resolutions; if we run up against the debt ceiling limit, which hits around about October; a series of things then begin to happen that propel the government in the direction of crisis. And the President wants to understand thoroughly what those are. He has already taken steps to try to avert those by giving to the Congress reasonable and very common sense proposals on how we could make progress on the federal budget. And those, as all of you know, have been roundly ignored by this Congress.

So he is working on the issue. He continues to consider what steps will be necessary for the orderly functioning and transaction of business. I imagine that they're going to look very closely at former Attorney General Civiletti's opinion about who constitutes essential federal personnel if we get into a situation where there's a shutdown and only essential personnel are asked to continue their duties. So those types of things will be underway.

At some point, we will also have to consider whether or not we notify federal employees that there are likely going to be reductions in forces. All of those issues had been among those questions that the President has addressed with his advisors. He's given them some instructions so that they can follow up in an orderly way. They are in the process of doing so now.

Q Are all military exempt?

MR. MCCURRY: I don't know the scope of the essential order. That was actually codified. My understanding is his opinion as Attorney General, which dates back to the 1980s was codified by Congress in 1990. They actually passed a law that stipulated who essential personnel should be and so deemed them.

Q There was also some memo by Weinberger back then about complaining about OMB micromanaging Defense at the time that this happened before. I just wondered to what extent --

MR. MCCURRY: Well, whatever the precedent, past experience in precedent is of those situations. They are being looked at carefully by administration officials now.

Q Mike, is there anything you can say about the latest on the defections of Iraq to Jordan?

MR. MCCURRY: Not beyond what I've already said, Trudy. I've indicated that, of course, it reflects what we believe is the deterioration of conditions inside Iraq. It reflects the incoherent lack of leadership that Saddam Hussein is now responsible for by those who were closest to him in his inner circle. It represents an unmasking of the truth that the world has long known, which is that he is not capable of civil leadership of the people of Iraq.

Q Do you have James Lee standing somewhere on the East Coast waving at Felix to tell it to go away?

MR. MCCURRY: A variety of federal agencies are carefully monitoring Hurricane Felix.

Q Is he stopping anywhere on the way home after Hawaii, like California?

MR. MCCURRY: It's possible. Yes. Can we announce that, Calvin? Yes, we expect him to visit Monterey, California, September 3, remain overnight in Monterey -- surprise, surprise. And on Monday, September 4, which is Labor Day, he will be speaking at Cal State University in Monterey Bay. The rest of the schedule we will announce as we determine it.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END

1:36 P.M. EDT

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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

August 11, 1995

PRESS BRIEFING
BY MICHAEL MCCURRY

The Briefing Room

1:26 P.M. EDT

MR. MCCURRY: Let me continue with a couple of items of interest. First, I just wanted to mention again, I told some of you earlier that the President's advisory committee on Gulf War veterans illnesses will be holding its first meeting on Monday and Tuesday next week, August 14, August 15. The First Lady will kick off the initial meeting at 9:30 a.m. Monday morning. It is going to be held at Capitol Hilton Hotel. She will be followed by Secretary Brown from the Veterans Administration, Secretary Shalala from Health and Human Services, and Deputy Secretary John White from the Department of Defense.

This advisory committee is just one part of the President's overall effort to get to the bottom of what happened in the Gulf, what illnesses are being experienced by Gulf War veterans, and to provide effective medical care to those who are ill. That's the subject that will be reviewed in the two days of meetings that they have.

Another item I think overlooked this week with all the other news being made, but I would draw it to your attention since here we've discussed often this ongoing question of the OMB's economic estimates and assumptions versus those of the Congressional Budget Office. I'd note that yesterday the blue chip forecasters, the 50 most prominent forecasters from around the country that the corporate community relies upon who develop the blue chip forecast have found that by a slightly narrow margin they found OMB's estimates to have a better chance of being a successful projection of the performance of the economy over the next decade than those that have been put forward by the CBO. It was slightly -- a narrow margin of difference in the judgments made by OMB's forecast versus CBO's forecast, but on balance those economies surveyed did favor the administration's forecast.

As Robert J. Egert, who is in Arizona, an economist and one of the blue chip forecasters, said, the 2.5 percent growth estimate which is in the OMB assumptions has a better chance of being more accurate. That was the consensus view of those economists who were consulted.

Dr. Rivlin sent a friendly letter to Chairman Kasich yesterday to just point out the arrival of this very important news and suggested that with these findings now in hand we should all be able to agree at this point to put aside what has really been a non-issue, and that is the validity of one set of assumptions or projections versus another. She said in a letter to the Chairman that we can move on to the real issues in the budget debate between the President and the congressional majority -- how long we should take to balance the budget, which Americans should get tax relief, whether Medicare beneficiaries should be forced to pay higher costs and whether we should expand our investments in education and training or reverse course. Those are the real issues that will lie

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ahead in the budget debates between the Executive Branch and the Legislative Branch. And as the blue chip forecasters indicate, they should not be phony debates about economic assumptions.

Q I'm sure they'll agree.

MR. MCCURRY: I hope they will.

Q Do you think the Congress should now accept the OMB forecast?

MR. MCCURRY: I think that as they have done in the past, they should agree which set of assumptions they're going to use and get on with the business of writing the budget. In past years, as we've said from time to time here, sometimes the Congress relies upon OMB numbers, sometimes they develop their own estimates. Frankly, sometimes the Congress does not even use the CBO numbers.

My understanding, if I'm not mistaken about this, is even in developing the current seven-year proposal of the Republican majority in Congress, they have in some instances not even used CBO's numbers. So economic assumptions and technical projections are fungible. They are not the core of the debate. The core of the debate are what policy directions, what priorities are going to lie behind that budget. And the sooner we get to those issues, the President feels, the better off the country will be because we can get on with the nation's business conducted in an orderly fashion and avoid what is now the impending crisis that will arrive as we reach the end of the fiscal year.

Q Why does the administration think that it can win the veto battle over Bosnia?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, first let me tell you that the President has just sent to the Congress his veto of the measure which would unilaterally lift the arms embargo against Bosnia Hercegovina in a message that accompanies the veto. The President says that he knows members of Congress share his goals of reducing the violence in Bosnia and working to end the war, but the vote to unilaterally lift the arms embargo is the wrong step at the wrong time.

The American people should understand the consequences of such an action for the people of Bosnia and for the people of the United States. The measure at this point to lift unilaterally the arms embargo would run the risk of further escalating the conflict in Bosnia, and would certainly Americanize U.S. participation in this conflict with the likely involvement of U.S. ground forces as a result.

Q Are you going to give us that statement?

MR. MCCURRY: Yes, we've got a statement, a longer statement that is available, if it's not out already.

Q The veto message or the same stuff you just said?

MR. MCCURRY: Same stuff I just said, said for your benefit.

Q Mike, you made those same arguments ad nauseam over the past several months and still you're two or three votes short of a veto beating back an override.

MR. MCCURRY: You're doing vote counts, we're doing vote counts. Our assumption is that over the course of the summer recess by Congress it will become much clearer on the ground, A, whether the effort to strengthen UNPROFOR and use the resources of NATO air power

to enforce the ultimatum that has been delivered to those committing aggression, that will be proven to be effective or not effective during the course of these coming weeks. And, second, the long-term viability of the U.N. mission -- it will become much clearer whether the mission itself can conduct its work over the course of the coming months and do so effectively. And also simultaneously as you know we are working with our Contact Group partners and our allies to reenergize the diplomatic search for a settlement to this conflict, and that, too, is underway now and we will know better as Congress returns later in the fall what the status of those diplomatic efforts are.

All of those things, we would argue, are going to work in the direction of members of Congress feeling they ought to wait, think twice about the perilous course they've embarked upon.

Q So you're really playing for time here, right?

Q Does the first part of that formulation presuppose a Serb attack on a U.N.-protected area and a NATO response?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, there's not been any indication that the Serbs are currently planning aggression against the safe areas. That's been one of the positive effects of the firmer position taken by the United Nations and NATO together, that the threat that did exist to the safe area of Gorazde has subsided somewhat, although, clearly, those safe areas still need humanitarian relief, they still need free movements of humanitarian relief convoys. But for the moment, there's no major Bosnian Serb offensive directed against those safe areas that have now been protected by both the United Nations and by the decisions of the North Atlantic Council.

Q So you're really gambling for time, hoping that things improve on the ground.

MR. MCCURRY: Well, so far things have improved on the ground. And over time we hope the combination of a firmer position by the West and more intense diplomacy will produce a result that the President seeks. And that is an end to the fighting, humanitarian relief to those refugees who are now scattered all over Bosnia, and a more determined effort to bring about a political settlement. Those have been illusive goals in recent months and they are by no means easily achieved goals. But there's intense work on all of those objectives now taking place.

Q Did you seek assurances from Senator Dole that he would not bring this up, say, late tonight?

MR. MCCURRY: We have had discussions with the leadership about what the Senate calendar looks like, and we have good understandings with the leadership that any member of the Senate could have asked to bring the measure forward.

Q But is that an indication that you aren't certain you have the votes?

MR. MCCURRY: We would acknowledge that to make the case effectively and to sustain the President's veto at this point, it would require hours, if not days, of hard work by the President and by the White House. Our sense and our read of the disposition of the Senate is they were not interested in remaining in session into next week so that we could do that type of aggressive work. We would have been willing to do so, but our understanding of the disposition of the Senate leadership is that they wanted to take their recess.

Q Was today the last day you had to do it?

MR. MCCURRY: No, I believe technically we would have had by calendar days until Monday if the Senate had remained in session until Monday.

Q What does Croatia -- the recent attacks by Croatian troops, how does that play into your scenario that things are getting better and may change the vote outcome?

MR. MCCURRY: Look, better is a relative term. I make that clear to begin with. There is great humanitarian suffering taking place by those who have been ethnically cleansed from the eastern enclaves, by those refugees who are now forced by the fighting in the Krajina to flee. So I hesitate to use the term "better" in describing anything having to do with Bosnia.

On the other hand, the situation -- the conflict itself, the fighting, has subsided somewhat. The Croatian offensive into the Krajina has now changed the configuration of where civilian populations are located. That might or might not have some impact on the diplomatic discussions. The area of Krajina and the area around the Bihac pocket was a significant factor in the deliberations between the parties on the merits of the Contact Group proposal, so that might, conceivably, have some effect now in their disposition on the underlying geographic elements of the dispute itself.

Q Does the atrocities against Krajina Serbs affect the moral equation in this matter?

MR. MCCURRY: No, they don't affect the moral equation because they are equally repugnant. No matter who conducts the type of dislocation of civilian populations, the burning of villages, the effort to displace civilian populations from their homes -- in this case, in the Krajina as a result of the offensive that took place in that region -- it's equally repugnant.

It's clear, that said, that the victims of genocide and ethnic cleansing have, during the long course of this conflict, have predominantly been Muslims. But the recent fighting in the Krajina has produced large flows of refugees out of the Krajina, and those civilians are no less displaced, no less in humanitarian stress than those who suffered at the other side of Bosnia from Serb aggression.

Q As Mr. Lake and Mr. Tarnoff continue to travel through capitals of Europe how often is the President in contact with them, or how are they in contact with the President?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, they have been reporting in to their respective agencies, as you know, between Under Secretary Tarnoff, Deputy Assistant Secretary Kruzel, General Clark, those who are part of the delegation, with Mr. Lake, both the White House, the State Department, the Defense Department and the Joint Chiefs are getting good briefs on the discussions that are underway. The President has been receiving regular reports from the Deputy National Security Advisor Sandy Berger on the course of these discussions.

We're satisfied that the talks have been, as reported, positive. The delegation has now met both in Bonn and Paris. They will in coming days also go to Russia. They will also be in Madrid and in Rome.

Q When is Tony due back, and is he likely to brief the President?

MR. MCCURRY: Oh, he certainly will brief the President upon his return. I would expect the delegation at the conclusion of the week and perhaps early next week to assess where they are. It's very likely there would be some additional diplomatic follow-up at

some point. I think we will be very interested in sharing with the parties some of the results of the deliberations. That could happen some time next week.

Q Are we likely to have a meeting in Wyoming? That's what I'm getting at.

MR. MCCURRY: I don't know of the National Security Advisor's plans to brief the President, but that could obviously be done by telephone.

Q The President said yesterday that he had no map in mind. Where does that leave the Contact Group map?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, the Contact Group proposal remains the basis for a settlement and the basis for future discussions between the parties.

Q Yeltsin is reported to be ready to lift the economic embargo on Serbia. Do you see this move, A, as connected to what Congress has done trying to lift the arms embargo on Bosnia, sort of a counter? And regardless of what his motivation may be or how he came to it, are we trying diplomatically to dissuade him from taking this step?

MR. MCCURRY: Yes, and we will have further discussions with the Russian Federation on that point as Mr. Lake's delegation goes to Russia.

Q Can we go to Iraq? Anything new on the defectors? Any information? Are they giving us a lot of good information?

MR. MCCURRY: I will say that the President had a second and very good phone call with the King of Jordan this morning. The King reported that he was very thankful for the remarks made by the President yesterday. The President and the King also discussed the status of the defectors, had a good discussion on that point. I'm not at liberty to share any of the details of that conversation, but it is clear that the motivation for the defections is the deplorable conditions that exist inside Iraq and the lack of credibility that Saddam Hussein has now as a leader of Iraq. And the motivation in that sense seemed to be a genuine one about concern for the people of Iraq.

Q Who called whom? Did the President call him?

MR. MCCURRY: I don't know. I believe -- did we place the call? I think we placed the call this morning. But they had a good exchange of views, and they'd agreed in their phone call yesterday to remain in touch.

Q Without going into specifics or details of what you might be hearing from them, are you receiving information from discussions with these two gentlemen from the Jordanians? The briefer yesterday was not certain how much they wanted to discuss.

MR. MCCURRY: The briefer was cautious yesterday in saying what type of information we've got. We have been in close contact with the government of Jordan about the discussions that have been underway.

Q Have U.S. officials had any direct contact with the individuals?

MR. MCCURRY: I just don't have anything for you on that.

Q I'm sorry, you aren't, perhaps deliberately, but you aren't saying whether or not we're getting any information at this point.

MR. MCCURRY: I'm saying -- I just told you, the President and the King talked and they shared some information on the two defectors. So, of course, we are getting some information.

Q The tobacco industry seems to be personalizing this issue that the President has outlined. They're staging quite serious attacks against Kessler. I wonder if you're concerned that Kessler has now become kind of the tobacco industry's poster boy in this debate and is diverting attention from substance.

MR. MCCURRY: He stood here before you yesterday, and I think it's more than adequate to say that he's someone who in the last 14 months has, with great care and great precision, addressed the scientific and legal issues that were imbedded in the decision announced by the President yesterday. Personal attacks of that nature are quite unfortunate because those are not the issues in dispute here. They would indicate to the White House that those who are now fighting the President, those who are seeking to reverse the President in the courts feel they don't have a very substantive case to make when they resort to that type of personal attack.

Q Do you think it would ever reach the point where you'd have to stand by Kessler in the face of demands for his resignation?

MR. MCCURRY: I don't think it's necessary because I don't think those types of charges are going to get very far. They're utterly without merit, and I think that's clear to the American people.

Q The President's legal defense trust fund released the numbers for the first six months of this year, and it showed that they raised about \$250,000, compared to about \$650,000 during the last six months of last year, at a time when the total legal bills are around \$2.1 million. How concerned is the President that there has been this dramatic decline in funds raised by the defense?

MR. MCCURRY: He's concerned as anyone would be facing that type of bill and obviously not having the wherewithal to pay that bill. The President is not a wealthy individual, so naturally he's concerned. But at the same time, he's got very important work to do as President and I don't think he'll allow his concern to preoccupy him unnecessarily as he continues to do what he's supposed to do, which is to serve the American people.

Q Just following up on that, have the President and the First Lady tried to make any provision, or do they have any concern about the very large legal bills being run up now by their aides as a result of their testimony in this continuing --

MR. MCCURRY: They, naturally, are sympathetic and they understand that many of their aides who have retained legal counsel face exactly the same situation that they do, in a sense. Most of the folks who have been called to testify before various committees or various proceedings are themselves not wealthy and are also going to face very large legal bills. And the President, as you can tell from the release today, is in a position to be understanding and sympathetic of the concerns that his aides might have as well.

Q But they don't have any practical notions of how they might either extend some of the funds from this fund to those aides or --

MR. MCCURRY: I haven't heard any discussion of that nature.

Q On the fund that the President requires the tobacco companies to contribute \$150 million a year, where is the legal authority for that? That seems almost like a direct tax that he's ordering.

MR. MCCURRY: I can't -- in reading the rule yesterday, I know there was a discussion of the legal premise under the Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act that would allow the FDA to take that provision. But I don't have it here, don't recall it off-hand. You might want to direct that over to the FDA, but they do have a discussion, if I'm not mistaken, within the proposed rule about the legal structure of that fund itself.

Q On the executive order of a few days ago, did you find out why the President didn't go for stronger --

MR. MCCURRY: You know, I did get an answer to that and I forgot to bring it with me. I'm sorry -- it's up on my desk. You might want to get that. Maybe we could come back to that if I get it, or you can follow up on it. But I did get an answer worked up on that; I just forgot to bring it down.

Q Going back to Iraq, does the President intend to hold a conversation with leaders of Saudi Arabia and Israel on the situation in Iraq and what he hears from King Hussein?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, there will be, as a result of some of the things the President said yesterday, there will be follow-up diplomatic contact between embassies. I'm not aware if the President has plans to make those calls at his level, but there certainly will be follow-up diplomatic contact in the region.

Q On that, Mike, the briefer told us yesterday there was some military activity undefined, but it was premature to say if it was connected to the defections. Twenty-four hours later, do you have any more light to shed on it?

MR. MCCURRY: I cannot shed light on it here. I would direct you to the Pentagon for any discussion that they might want to make about any particular movement of U.S. military resources.

Q Any indication that any of the defectors might seek U.S. asylum?

MR. MCCURRY: Not that I'm aware of at this point, but there are still discussions underway in Jordan.

Q I'm sorry, I couldn't --

Q On that specific topic?

MR. MCCURRY: Not on that specific point. There are still just discussions with the two individuals that are underway.

Q I don't want to redefine David's question, but you said -- you referred to the movement of U.S. military resources. I think what we're asking about is movement of Iraqi military.

MR. MCCURRY: My understanding is that we've seen no evidence of military moves directly related to the defections. Iraqi troops have not traditionally been deployed for action against Jordan. Most of their deployments have been north of Baghdad and most likely, as indicated at the Pentagon yesterday in response to

some of the disturbances in north Iraq related to the Kurdish population.

There have been some signs that there could be the beginning of some type of exercise or operation in the north, but in any event, as the President suggested yesterday, given Saddam Hussein's record and his pattern of behavior, it's very smart for our forces to be prudent in the coming days.

Q Will the Pentagon be announcing some troop --

MR. MCCURRY: I would ask -- go over and ask them.

Q Mike, a couple of questions on the First Lady. Is there anything new on the China visit?

MR. MCCURRY: I haven't heard anything new on that today.

Q The First Lady's Office yesterday I think told D'Amato that they were going to release some phone logs that he wants. Do you know when that might happen?

MR. MCCURRY: I do not.

Q Do you have anything on the evidence that was presented yesterday showing that Mrs. Clinton was deeper involved in defending Madison in the Whitewater stuff?

MR. MCCURRY: I do not.

Q What are the plans for briefing if anything needs addressing on Bosnia or Iraq in the next two weeks?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, we will watch developments on the ground. If there's need for briefings, we will most likely conduct them at the Pentagon and at the State Department. The White House Press Office will be operational out in Wyoming and we'll pass information on to them if there's a need to do that. My plan is not to have any briefings conducted here during the period in which the President is out there.

Q Can you make that solid?

MR. MCCURRY: Can I make a 100 percent solemn pledge, a solemn pledge not to do any briefings?

Q Because some of us who travel sometimes find ourselves in the dark because briefings are held back here that we miss if we're on the road, strangely enough.

MR. MCCURRY: Well, I can't -- it's certainly appropriate for the Pentagon and the State Department to continue whatever schedule of briefings that they would normally have in coming weeks, and I can't guarantee that there won't be items on those two subjects -- on those several subjects done there. But we don't have any plans to do anything here.

Q Are you coming out there at all?

MR. MCCURRY: I don't see any reason to do so now.

Q But if there was some grave matter that arose you would be anyplace where you were needed?

MR. MCCURRY: If a grave matter arose that was sufficiently important, the President would most like be here and not there.

Q You mentioned the President was meeting with his economic team today.

MR. MCCURRY: Yes.

Q Well, Secretary Rubin yesterday said that in order to avoid a government shutdown he thought it would be a good idea for Congress to try to pass an extension of continuing funding and the debt limit ceiling prior to October 1. Do you have any reason to believe that Congress is going to go for short-term or long-term extensions of either of these?

MR. MCCURRY: We don't have any reason to believe that Congress has made a final disposition on that.

Q Besides MTV, does the President have other appearances on behalf of the tobacco announcement, or the Vice President and First Lady in the coming days?

MR. MCCURRY: As I mentioned earlier, I suspect he will devote his Saturday radio address tomorrow to that subject. I wouldn't rule out that in coming days he will continue to address this subject, and there are a variety of administration officials now who are making appearances and-or doing interviews on much the same subject.

Q Are you going to put out the entire MTV transcript? They said they have released any objection to that.

MR. MCCURRY: I had a brief discussion with one of the officials from MTV at the end and if I am not mistaken, we agreed that as soon as they make some of the excerpts available to broadcast organizations. They will also make a full transcript available, and I think that was supposedly going to be ready in a short while.

Q They're deciding the video excerpts, is that it?

MR. MCCURRY: My understanding is they are to protect their proprietary interest in their interview.

Q What about the full transcript?

Q Is the White House not going to put out the transcript?

MR. MCCURRY: We want to honor their -- as we do with most news organizations that have exclusive interviews, we want to abide by their wishes. But I think that their preference was to have a text-only transcript, full transcript, available I believe when they make the broadcast excerpts available.

Q That they would release the transcript, or you would release it?

MR. MCCURRY: If that's okay by them we will do it here.

Q That would be easier for everybody.

Q And you're figuring that those, the broadcast excerpts are going to be released here or somewhere else?

MR. MCCURRY: I think they were going to do it here to the pool. But why don't you check afterwards. Someone else was working on those arrangements.

Q Are American officials participating in the
conversations with the Iraqi defectors? And if not, are we seeking
--

MR. MCCURRY: I indicated earlier I didn't have anything
on that.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END

1:55 P.M. EDT

#101-08/11

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

BACKGROUND BRIEFING
BY
SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL

August 10, 1995

The Briefing Room

4:02 P.M. EDT

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Let me just recap points that the President made this afternoon in addressing this question. The first is that these defections highlight how isolated Saddam Hussein has become inside Iraq. Even his closest advisors are concluding that his policies are ruining the country.

Second, this demonstrates that the President's policy towards Iraq of refusing to discuss lifting sanctions until Iraq has met all of its U.N. obligations is working. Clearly, there's greater pressure on Saddam than ever before.

And finally, King Hussein's decision to grant asylum to these individuals is an act of courage. The President spoke to the King Tuesday night and assured him that the United States would be behind him in the event of any Iraqi retaliation of any kind.

So this is potentially a very significant development and one which we'll be watching closely over the days ahead. I'll be happy to respond to any questions you may have on the details of this.

Q What access could you tell us did these two high-ranking officials have? Did they know everything that Saddam has in chemical, nuclear or any other kind of weapon?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: These were people from the inner-most circle of the regime. Hussein Kamel, the elder of the two brothers, has been responsible for Iraq's military industrial complex for years. He was at one point head of Iraq's nuclear program. He knows everything about Iraq's efforts to hide from U.N. weapons inspectors, Iraq's weapons of mass destruction since the end of the war. So he's in a position to know everything, to use your terminology, and to reveal a great deal about what's going on inside the regime.

His brother, Saddam Kamel, was a very senior official in Iraq and Saddam Hussein's personal bodyguard; again, right at the core of the regime, right where it lives. There are probably in Iraq today, outside of Saddam's two sons, no one more close to him, no one who had a more authoritative position within the power structure.

Q Do you have any other evidence of more widespread dissension in Iraq at the moment?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: We have seen over the past several years a steady deterioration in the coherence of the Iraqi power structure. It has reached, going back a year or more, levels of institutions on which he depends heavily, such as the

MORE

Republican Guard. We have seen a series of refinements of his own protective arrangements. He used to rely on the Republican Guard exclusively. He had to create a special Republican Guard unit to protect him. And more recently, he's developed new specialized units. Clearly, there is a fragmenting going on in the system that keeps him in power and protects him.

We have also seen as the sanctions have bit harder month after month fragmenting within the ruling elite itself, including Saddam's immediate family. We have seen in the last several months repeated reports of squabbling among family members, squabbling between this individual and Saddam Hussein's sons. Clearly, this is a regime under pressure and the defections are an indication of how serious it's become.

Q Well, do you think his days are numbered?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I'm not going to predict that from this podium. Those kind of predictions have been made too often in the past. But this is probably the most serious setback he has suffered since the mutinies immediately following the Gulf War.

Q What more can you tell us about what these two have been communicating to the Jordanians about the situation there and why they left?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, they only came out on the 8th, and so we don't have a lot of details yet at this point. We have been communicating closely with the Jordanians since they arrived, but I really don't have any details in terms of what their immediate agenda is, what they intend to do, how much they're prepared to reveal. Those are unknowns at this stage.

Q How much of a threat does there seem to be of Iraqi retaliation for these defections? And related to that, apparently, a Marine expeditionary force is going to conduct joint exercises with Jordanian troops. When does that start and how does that fit into all of this?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, when you're dealing with Saddam Hussein, I think his record suggests you always have to be prepared for the possibility at least that he will resort to use of force or threaten the use of force. As a practical matter, Iraqi forces are not traditionally -- have not been traditionally deployed in a manner threatening to Jordan. They have been deployed to the south, they've been deployed towards Iran, and they've been deployed to the north. It would not be an easy thing for him to redeploy those forces in a way to threaten the Jordanians, but you have to be prepared for the contingency that he would do that.

We have not seen any signs since this occurred of a change in Iraqi dispositions, although there are fluctuations in the level of readiness of the Iraqi Army from time to time and it's something we watch very carefully. We don't see anything directly related to this, is the answer to your question.

Q How about the Pentagon exercise --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: This is an exercise that has been scheduled, it's not directly related to this event. But it is one element of an existing military relationship with Jordan which is important to both countries. And as the President said, we have reassured King Hussein that we are prepared to deal -- help him deal with any potential threat from Iraq.

Q There's not -- you were saying that you see no changes in things. I thought the Pentagon just finished briefing to

the effect that they're seeing some mobilization of units. They may not be able to link them directly to this, but that they are seeing --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Let me ask my colleague to address this question because it gets to a level of detail that's beyond my technical competence. The point I was addressing here is I don't think there's a direct relationship between what has just occurred with respect to the defections and what we've been seeing.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: In point of fact, it's probably too early for this to have had any direct relationship. There is some movement and some activity that is taking place that I would -- mobilization is probably too strong of a word because that implies some sort of country-wide effort. But there is certainly movement in the military that looks like preparations for either a large exercise or some sort of operation.

Q Is it possible that those movements might be related to a coup against Saddam? Do you see any evidence thereof?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No, that would be unlikely.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: As I mentioned, there have been fluctuations in the level of readiness of Iraq's Army repeatedly over the past several years, and so I would caution against jumping to any conclusions with respect to these signs that we're seeing.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Because they do have the same look that an exercise would have. And in point of fact, as I pointed out earlier, it's too early for this to be directly a result of the defection. So it could still even be an exercise or a large inspection.

Q What prompts the new warning? Are we concerned that Saddam might move, or are we more wanting to get out the message that his power appears to be failing?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No, the reason for the President's stating this afternoon that we have reassured the King in this regard is that something very potentially significant has happened within Iraq, and the actors involved in that event are now in Jordan. And the King has granted them political asylum. This is a serious setback for Saddam Hussein, and in the past he has responded to emergencies on occasion by lashing out militarily or at least by threatening the use of force. So we think it's entirely appropriate that these assurances have been extended and we don't want them to be a secret.

Q Do you see a potential domestically?

Q What are these squabbles in the inner circle about? Do they revolve primarily around sanctions strategy, or something else?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I'll let my colleague comment on this as well, but my sense is that you can trace a lot of this back to the sanctions problem that Iraq has and has been dealing with for years. You're dealing with a limited resource base. You're dealing with a shrinking resource base, as the effect of the sanctions grows over the months and years. And you're dealing with a power structure in which there is less profit and resources to go around and people are inevitably competing for what is available in terms of actual concrete resources, in terms of influence. And I

suspect that there is a sense in which there is a debate ongoing about the best way to get out of sanctions.

I would not presume to have a solid lock on that debate because the workings of the Iraqi regime are something that we don't have a clear sense of.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I think that hits it right on the head. There are different branches within Saddam's family and they do compete for things like profit from the limited trade that does take place in the wake of sanctions. And sanctions have put an incredible amount of pressure on the regime. And that is contributing to pressures within the family. And this is the first time they've really bubbled up to the surface significantly.

Q You don't know what the actually rift was between these brothers-in-law and --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: The actual incident that prompted this defection? No.

Q Who is debriefing the Kamel brothers and is there a chance that the United States could get in on that debriefing?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I'm not going to be able to get into the details of exactly how, where, or through what modalities they're being debriefed. Obviously, this is something in which we have great interest. We are communicating closely with the Jordanians, but I really don't what to go beyond that.

Q Do you know they're going to definitely spill the beans?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: As I suggested earlier, I don't know what their intentions are. I can't make that prediction at this point.

Q Are they still in Jordan?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Yes.

Q Wasn't there also a report that one of Saddam's sons, not sons-in-law, but one of his sons had asked to see King Hussein?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: His son, Odai, is in Amman today. I don't know if he's still there. He may be leaving. But he was there for meetings with Jordanian officials. I can't confirm whether he saw the King. Do we know that?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I don't think he did.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: But our assumption is it is related to the defections in some way. We have no idea what his mission was. It probably wasn't a pleasant conversation.

Q Did the Jordanians consult with the United States before offering asylum?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No.

Q You seem to be suggesting that the more likely, the more natural response of Saddam is to strike out rather than consolidate, become more insulated, grab on to what power he has --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I don't mean to suggest that. We honestly don't know.

Q Is it likely that he would hunker down and --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: It's hard to quantify, but the point that I would like to stress is that when you're dealing with this man with this regime, you have to be prepared for the worst. And the assurances that have been extended by our government to Jordan are based on that understanding of the nature of the Iraqi regime and its past record.

Q So are we -- what actions then are we taking to be prepared?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: The President has asked that a range of military contingencies be examined. That process is underway. I obviously can't get into any details on that.

Q Do you see domestic-based threat to the King by his decision to do this?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: The King's domestic base?

Q Domestic threat to the King as a result. I mean, we're talking about a threat from the -- a perceived possible threat from outside.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Right, right. I think that the King has shown a very solid ability to read the mood in Jordan with respect to Iraq. Certainly my assumption is that he feels that he's on solid ground in that score in this case as well.

Would you want to comment on that from an analytical standpoint?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I think that's a minimal risk. I think since Desert Storm, as well, the people of Jordan have shown sympathy to the people of Iraq perhaps, but lessening sympathy to Saddam. So I think the statements that have come out tend to support that. And I would not see, at the moment, at least, a domestic threat to the King.

Q Is there any talk at all about moving him outside the country? I mean, you said there's nothing right away, but any long-term possibilities?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Don't want to speculate on long-term possibilities there in Jordan today. And the King has indicated that they may stay there. So I just don't know where that will come out.

Q On the same issue, is there any mention at all that they might, or any chance you've heard that they might seek asylum in the United States?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: That issue hasn't come up.

Q Can you just give us, on sanctions, just a little bit of a rundown on what he would have to do to have the sanctions lifted, what are the reasons for them right now?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: This is not a secret. It's all spelled out in black and white in the relevant U.N. Security Council resolutions. They are contained in Resolution 687 and 688, which respectively ended the Gulf War and established conditions for the cease fire, and responded to Saddam's treatment of minorities in Iraq after the war. 687 lays out a number of specific requirements, including that he account for all past weapons of mass destruction

programs fully. I think he had to do that within 50 days after the passage of that resolution. It's a debate that's still going on -- and that he accept long-term monitoring of his capability to regenerate those kinds of capabilities; that he give a full accounting for all missing Kuwaitis as a result of the war; that he return all Kuwait military and other assets that were plundered from Kuwait during the war; that he make a clean break with terrorist activities. And of course, they're continuing to house terrorist groups in Baghdad. That's 687, correct?

Resolution 688 deals with the problem of internal repression and mandates that it cease and that he allow observers, international observers to ensure that it has stopped. Those are the steps of obligations, all of which he is in violation of four and a half years after the war ended.

Q Just to clarify one point -- the President has asked that a range of contingencies you say be considered or recommended to him?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: It's under review.

Q They're under review. Is there any time frame that he mentioned?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: He has made an assurance and he's asked the relevant expertise be brought to bear to determine what may come up and how we would meet it if it did.

Q But no time frame? He doesn't want it in two weeks --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I'm not going to get into those kind of details.

Q Do we know the identity of maybe some other of the defectors? Do we know all -- I was thinking in terms of -- the missile person who was very familiar and ran the missile program for a while -- any of these high-ranking people in addition to the two main ones, the brothers?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No, it's the two brothers; it's the two daughters of Saddam to whom they're married; it's the grandchildren including his eldest grandchild; and it is, as I understand it, personal staff who are accompanying them. Is that fair?

Q We haven't seen any other --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Otherwise we don't have anything on that.

Q You've said that it's not clear just what access the U.S. will have. It's fair to say, I guess, given the relationship with Jordan, that you're viewing this as a good opportunity to glean quite a bit of information.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I don't want to speculate on what information may come from it. Clearly, there is a potential for opening up some insights we have not previously had into the nature of this regime and what it's doing in important areas.

Q But are you getting any signs that Jordan is not going to be cooperative?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: None whatsoever.

Q Have they been cooperative with the Jordanians -- the defectors?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I don't have a detailed enough description of exactly what those conversations have involved to be able to give you details of that at this point.

Q There's no indication that they're stonewalling or anything like that?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: None whatsoever. And the circumstances are these people have sought asylum in Jordan. It has been granted. I assume there is a dialogue going on there of some sort.

Q Where exactly are we at in terms of Jordan's debt relief right now?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Jordan's debt relief was signed into law a month ago, three weeks ago --

Q The rescission bill.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: The rescission bill. The provision was contained within the rescission bill, and it's done.

Q Have the payments been actually made?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Have the payments been made? I'm not sure that it's a question of payments being made, but it -- basically, it's off the books.

THE PRESS: Thank you very much.

END

4:20 P.M. EDT

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

August 10, 1995

PRESS CONFERENCE BY THE PRESIDENT

The East Room

1:32 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Good afternoon. Today I am announcing broad executive action to protect the young people of the United States from the awful dangers of tobacco.

Over the years we have learned more and more about the dangers of addictive substances to our young people. In the '60s and '70s we came to realize the threat drugs posed to young Americans. In the '80s we came to grips with the awful problem of drunk driving among young people. It is time to take a third step to free our teenagers from addiction and dependency.

Adults are capable of making their own decisions about whether to smoke. But we all know that children are especially susceptible to the deadly temptation of tobacco and its skillful marketing. Today and every day this year, 3,000 young people will begin to smoke. One thousand of them ultimately will die of cancer, emphysema, heart disease, and other diseases caused by smoking. That's more than one million vulnerable young people a year being hooked on nicotine that ultimately could kill them.

Therefore, by executive authority, I will restrict sharply the advertising, promotion, distribution and marketing of cigarettes to teenagers. I do this on the basis of the best available scientific evidence, the findings of the American Medical Association, the American Cancer Society, the American Heart Association, the American Lung Association, the Centers for Disease Control. Fourteen months of study by the Food and Drug Administration confirms what we all know -- cigarettes and smokeless tobacco are harmful, highly addictive and aggressively marketed to our young people. The evidence is overwhelming, and the threat is immediate.

Our children face a health crisis that is getting worse. One-third more 8th-graders, and one-quarter more 10th-graders are smoking today than four years ago. One out of five high school seniors is a daily smoker. We need to act, and we must act now, before another generation of Americans is condemned to fight a difficult and grueling personal battle with an addiction that will cost millions of them their lives.

Adults make their own decisions about whether or not to smoke. Relatively few people start to smoke past their teens. Many adults have quit; many have tried and failed. But we all know that teenagers are especially susceptible to pressures. Pressure to the manipulation of mass media advertising, the pressure of the seduction of skilled marketing campaigns aimed at exploiting their insecurities and uncertainties about life.

When Joe Camel tells young children that smoking is cool, when billboards tell teens that smoking will lead to true romance, when Virginia Slims tells adolescents that cigarettes may make them thin and glamorous, then our children need our wisdom, our guidance and our experience. We're their parents and it is up to us to protect them.

So today I am authorizing the Food and Drug Administration to initiate a broad series of steps all designed to stop sales and marketing of cigarettes and smokeless tobacco to children. As a result, the following steps will be taken.

First, young people will have to prove their age with an I.D. card to buy cigarettes. Second, cigarette vending machines which circumvent any ban on sales to kids will be prohibited. Third, schools and playgrounds will be free of tobacco advertising on billboards in their neighborhoods. Fourth, images such as Joe Camel will not appear on billboards or in ads in publications that reach substantial numbers of children and teens. Fifth, teens won't be targeted by any marketing gimmicks, ranging from single cigarette sales to T-shirts, gym bags and sponsorship of sporting events. And, finally, the tobacco industry must fund and implement an annual \$150-million campaign aimed at stopping teens from smoking through educational efforts.

Now, these are all common-sense steps. They don't ban smoking; they don't bar advertising. We do not, in other words, seek to address activities that seek to sell cigarettes only to adults. We are stepping in to protect those who need our help, our vulnerable young people. And the evidence of increasing smoking in the last few

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years is plain and compelling.

Now, nobody much likes government regulation. And I would prefer it if we could have done this in some other way. The only other way I can think of is if Congress were to write these restrictions into law. They could do that. And if they do, this rule could become unnecessary. But it is wrong to believe that we can take a voluntary approach to this problem. And absent congressional action, and in the presence of a massive marketing and lobbying campaign by cigarette companies aimed at our children, clearly, I have no alternative but to do everything I can to bring this assault to a halt.

The issue has touched all of us in personal ways. We all know friends or family members whose lives were shortened because of their involvement with tobacco. The Vice President's sister, a heavy smoker who started as a teen, died of lung cancer. It is that kind of pain that I seek to spare other families and young children. Less smoking means less cancer, less illness, longer lives -- a stronger America. Acting together we can make a difference. With this concerted plan targeted at those practices that especially prey upon our children, we can save lives, and we will.

To those who produce and market cigarettes, I say today, take responsibility for your actions. Sell your products only to adults. Draw the line on children. Show by your deeds as well as your words that you recognize that it is wrong as well as illegal to hook one million children a year on tobacco.

Q Mr. President, with your decision on tobacco you're taking on one of the biggest cash crops in a region where you've already got major political problems. Are you writing off the south for next year's elections? And isn't this a blow to other Democratic candidates in tobacco states?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, first of all, the most important thing is that there is an epidemic among our children. You've got a third more 8th-graders, a quarter more 10-graders smoking than there were 10 years ago. Whatever the political consequences, a thousand kids a day are beginning a habit which will probably shorten their lives. I mean, that is the issue. And I believe that is the issue everywhere.

I believe there are tobacco farmers in the states which grow tobacco, who have been involved in it a hundred years or more -- their families -- who don't want their kids to start smoking. We're not talking about whether they have a right to grow tobacco, or reap the paltry four and a half cents, which is all they get out of a pack of cigarettes. We're talking about whether we are going to do what we know is the right thing to do to save the lives of America's children. And I think it is more important than any political consequence.

Helen.

Q Mr. President, the war in Bosnia is widening. How long is the world, particularly the Europeans who have been there in the past, how long are they going to stand -- we all are going to stand by and watch this barbarism on both sides? And what are your new initiatives to end this suffering?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, first of all, let me briefly review what our objectives are. Our objectives are to minimize suffering, to stop the war from spreading, to preserve the integrity of a Bosnia state. We have promoted the Muslim Croat Federation. We have plainly succeeded in limiting the war. And except when the United Nations and NATO had not done what they said they would do, we have saved lives.

This is an important moment in Bosnia, and it could be a moment of real promise. Because of the military actions of the last few days, the situation on the ground has changed. There is some uncertainty and instability. It could go either way. But I think it's a time when we should try to make a move to make peace.

Now, since the fall of Srebrenica and Zepa, we have tried to do two things: first of all, to strengthen the presence of the United Nations through the Rapid Reaction Force of the French, the British and the Dutch, which we are supporting; and through getting a clearer chain of command and a stronger, broader use of authority for NATO to have air power where necessary where the protected areas are threatened.

The second thing we want to do is to see whether or not some diplomatic solution can be brought to bear that would be fair and decent and just, and that would take advantage of this moment where people are reassessing their various positions. And that's what Mr. Lake is doing in Europe. We are consulting with all of our allies, and we're going to do the very best we can. I think we need to try to

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make a decent and good peace here because, ultimately, that's the answer to all the questions you ask.

Q -- you have new ideas?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we're exploring some ideas with the Europeans. I will say again what I said from the first day I came here: I do not believe it is right to impose peace on people. I don't think in the end you get a lasting peace. So the United States does not seek to impose peace. But we're exploring some different ideas. We don't have a set map; we don't have a set position. We have some ideas that the new events may make possible, and we're discussing it with our allies.

Q Mr. President, given the powerful evidence of the dangers of smoking which you cited, wouldn't it have been more logical to impose an outright ban instead of a regulatory partial step which has the effect of getting the federal government into the business of regulating the size of print in advertising?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, first I don't know that the federal government will regulate the size of print; we regulate the warning labels. And, of course, there is a proposal here on advertising to try to deal with restricting access to billboard advertising and others.

But I think it would be wrong to ban cigarettes outright because, number one, it's not illegal for adults to use them. Tens of millions of adults do use them, and I think it would be as ineffective as prohibition was. But I think to focus on our children is the right thing to do. Purchasing of cigarettes by young people, children is supposed to be illegal in all 50 states, but they do it regularly. These fine young people here were with me this morning, and one of them talked about how he bought cigarette pack after cigarette pack after cigarette pack out of vending machines to try to demonstrate to his local legislators that the laws were a sham. These will not make the laws a sham. This will enable us to save young people's lives.

Q Mr. President, has there been any progress in getting China to free human rights activist, Harry Wu? And related to that, will Mrs. Clinton be going to China in September to attend the U.N. Conference on Women?

THE PRESIDENT: On the first question, we're obviously very concerned about Harry Wu and following his case very closely. And I think the situation is in a position where the less that is said about it right now, the better. But it's a very important issue to the United States, and I think to people throughout the world.

No decision has yet been made about whether the First Lady will go to China. But I think it's important for the American people to understand that this Conference on Women is a United Nations-sponsored conference that they decided to hold in China. It is a very important thing in its own right, and the United States will be represented there with a very strong delegation, whether she goes, or not. And I think it's important that we be represented there.

Yes, Wolf.

Q Mr. President, the situation in Iraq seems to be somewhat fluid right now with the defection of two of Saddam Hussein's daughters, two of his sons-in-law, his oldest grandchild to Jordan, and King Hussein's granting political asylum to all of these people. First of all, can you assess what is happening in Baghdad right now? And have you offered additional assurances to Jordan that the United States will provide security if there is a threat from Iraq?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, as soon as the defections occurred, King Hussein contacted us, and I called him back as quickly as I could on Tuesday evening, and we had a long talk about it. I think what these defections demonstrate is just how difficult things are within Iraq now, and how out of touch Saddam Hussein has become with reality, how difficult things are for his people. I also think this evidence supports the strong and firm position the United States has taken of not lifting the sanctions until Iraq fully complies with all the United Nations resolutions. I think that is -- it's clear that we have done the right thing.

Now, with regard to your second question, King Hussein's decision, located where he is, to grant asylum to those individuals was clearly an act of real courage. And I have assured him and told him that we would stand behind Jordan. We owe it to the people who are our partners in peace in the Middle East to stand behind them, and we have already made it clear that if Iraq threatens its neighbors or violates United Nations resolutions, we would take appropriate action. I think we have to do so in this case.

Q Any contingency steps being taken?

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THE PRESIDENT: Well, I think you saw when Kuwait was threatened a few months ago, we are quite well-organized, and we have thought through what our -- various scenarios there and how we might move. But beyond that, I don't want to say. And I don't want to raise a red flag. I'm just saying we know that Saddam Hussein has been unpredictable in the past, we know this must be a very unsettling development, and it should be clear that the United States considers Jordan our ally and entitled to our protection if there security is threatened as a result of this incident.

Q Mr. President, given the fact that there's been a 20-year war against drugs which are illegal for everybody which has produced, at best, mixed results, and given the fact that anybody who has kids know that the more you prohibit something, the more attractive it often becomes, what makes you think that you think you can do any better in the war against cigarettes than we've done against drugs?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, first of all, let me say that -- let me take on your premise here. There have been sustained periods of years in our country and in recent history when drug use has gone down in all categories of drugs, among all ages of people without regard to race or income. Unfortunately, today the picture is somewhat mixed because casual drug use among young people seems to be going up in areas where they feel a certain level of hopelessness. And we intend to reassert our efforts there.

But it's simply not true that cultural changes and legal bars together cannot work to reduce consumption. With regard to cigarettes, we have seen cultural changes leading to reduction and consumption. But what we see among young people is adults quitting and young people increasing their usage. If you make it clearly illegal, more inaccessible, you reduce the lure of advertising, and then you have an affirmative campaign, a positive campaign, so that you don't just say no, you give young people information and you make it the smart, the cool, the hip thing to do to take care of yourself and keep yourself healthy and alive, I believe there is every evidence from what has happened in drugs and in many other areas that we will see a dramatic decline in smoking among young people. I think we can do that.

And I think you see -- there have been a lot of cultural changes to that effect in other areas. You see some states that have done it right have big increases in the use of seatbelts. Drunk driving goes down dramatically in some areas with the combination of the right sort of enforcement and the right sort of publicity. So I believe -- I just don't accept your premise. I think we'll have a big dent in this problem.

Q Mr. President, the House has cut \$20 billion in discretionary spending for next year. Will they have to return some of those cuts to avoid you vetoing some of their appropriations bills?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. (Laughter.)

Q Mr. President, on Whitewater, you've said in the past that as far as you know everything as far as major evidence that is going to come out is out. We now face the prospect of hearings going into 1996. Do you view this as pure politics? Do you worry about the overall shadow it has cast, merely the appearance of wrongdoing over the White House?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't have anything new to add to what I've already said about that. I will reiterate, when I started this whole episode I said I would cooperate fully; I have cooperated fully. There is nothing else for me to do. I have to spend my energies and time being President, and that's what I'm doing my best to do.

Q Mr. President, what message do you want Senator Dodd and Mr. McLarty to take to Ross Perot when they go down there this weekend? And, also, do you feel that Ross Perot's contribution to the issue of political reform is significant enough that you would consider appointing him to the bipartisan commission should it get established?

THE PRESIDENT: The answer to the second question -- let me answer that first -- the answer to the second question is, yes, I would consider doing that, but, first, the Speaker has got to answer my letter, or see John Gardner or Doris Kearns Goodwin, or do something to respond to the handshake we made in New Hampshire. Of all the strange things that happen in Washington -- and I know people think that all the rules are different here than they are for anybody anywhere else in America -- but even here, when you shake hands with somebody in broad daylight and say you're going to do something, you ought to at least act like you're going to do it. (Laughter.) Where I come from, you know, if kids did that, their mamas wouldn't let them have dinner before -- they got spanked, when I was growing up. I

mean, this is an amazing thing. So, yes, I would.

The second part of the question was what will their message be. Their message will be, number one, that the things that Ross Perot and Bill Clinton advocated in '92 had a lot of overlap, and we have made significant progress in implementing 80 percent of the things that Ross Perot campaigned for in 1992. Two, a lot of the things that we haven't done are because of obstruction in Congress -- and I mention only two; the line-item veto and political reform. And third, our budget is more consistent with the budget priorities outlined by Ross Perot and his campaign in 1992; that is, balance the budget, but increase investment in education, research and development, technology and defense conversion.

So we've got a record message. We've got a present conflict message. We've got a message to ask them to come help us to support meaningful political reform and the right kind of balanced budget.

Q Mr. President, you noted in your speech in Charlotte yesterday that children follow what we do more than what we say. And I wonder what you think the message is when, on the one hand, the government cracks down on teen smoking; on the other hand, it spends perhaps \$25 million a year subsidizing the growth of tobacco, and when you yourself continue to smoke those big, old cigars. (Laughter.)

THE PRESIDENT: Well, first of all, as you know, I'm allergic to cigars, so I don't smoke many anymore. But I smoke a handful a year probably -- and I probably shouldn't. And I try not to do it in any way that sets a bad example. But I plead guilty to that.

On the tobacco program, if it is self-financing -- and I have always supported the tobacco program. It is essentially a self-financing program. The question is, do you want this tobacco grown by family farmers, or do you want it grown by big corporations if it's a self-financing program? I would not favor a large taxpayer outlay for it. But a self-financing program, which essentially is what that is, has been designed to preserve the structure of family farms and the culture of the family farms rather than let the big tobacco companies grow it themselves and turn all those folks into hired hands. I have thought, since it was going to be grown one way or the other, the family farm structure was a better one. I don't think that sends a signal that we think young people ought to smoke cigarettes.

Q -- the Colombian government has captured some of the top leaders of both cartels and there's been friction between your government and the Samper government when he came in. My first question is, do you think they are doing everything they can? And the second question is, how worried are you that as the Colombian cartel wanes in influence, Mexican cartels will pick up the --

THE PRESIDENT: Well, first of all, I want to support the statements made by the DEA Director in my administration, Tom Consideine. We have worked very hard with the Colombians and with others in South America, and you see the results in the last several months. We have had more major drug dealers arrested than in any previous similar time in our history, I believe. And we're on the verge of breaking this Cali Cartel. It's been great cooperation; we've worked hard. It's making a difference.

Secondly, as long as the raw crops can be grown and processed and distributed, we will have a constant battle, as long as there's a demand in the United States, to keep any vacuum from being filled. And we are exploring today what the problems created by our successes might be -- that is, if we continue to break down existing cartels, who will take up the slack and how can we prevent it.

Q Mr. President, last week you said that you did not want to advance a tobacco strategy that would get caught up in the courts and prevent any kind of action from taking place for years. Now you seem to have embarked on that strategy. Tobacco companies have already today filed suit against your proposals. Why did you determine a voluntary effort in concert with the tobacco companies would not work? And is there any hope for some sort of compromise, some sort of either compromise with the tobacco companies or congressional action before you implement these regulations?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, first of all, I had hoped that the tobacco companies would agree to support these restrictions and to put them in law. And it's still not too late for that. The FDA -- Dr. Kessler has announced today a rulemaking procedure on the assumption of jurisdiction and on the specifics that I just outlined. If the tobacco companies accept those and this Congress will write them into law, then you will not have a long regulatory proceeding. But you will have immediate -- immediate -- effects. That is, if they would rather have a law than federal regulation, the FDA Director, Dr. Kessler, and I would rather have an immediate impact on teen smoking,

not two years of litigation and then start the work. So it is not too late for that.

But I am against a voluntary plan. I'm against it for several reasons. First of all, there would be no way to enforce it. Secondly, the history of voluntary agreements with the tobacco industry is not good, to put it mildly. And, thirdly, even if they tried to adhere to it I don't believe they could legally do so.

Let me just give you one example. Suppose you were in the vending machine business and you sued the tobacco companies for deciding together that they were going to not let your vending machines go anywhere, without a legal requirement there's a good chance that could be held in a court of law to be a restraint of trade. So I think even if they tried to do it, they couldn't do it.

So we have to have a mandatory system. But I would just as soon have an act of Congress. Doctor Kessler agrees because we've got an epidemic of teen smoking, and far better to start right now as soon as we can pass a law than wait until we wade through all this litigation.

Q Mr. President, there was a scary breakdown yesterday in the air traffic control system in the western United States and we've had similar incidents in past months and recent years. Can you tell the American people that the FAA is doing everything possible to preserve the safety of the flying public, or do you see that new measures need to be taken?

THE PRESIDENT: I can tell you that I have asked that question repeatedly since I have been President, and I have worked very hard on making sure that we are moving to do everything we can constantly to make sure that the air traffic control system is as safe as possible.

We also, as you know, have ordered some new measures to be taken to promote airline security, which the Secretary of Transportation announced just in the last couple of days. And I do want to emphasize to the American people because I know there's been a lot of discussion about it, there was no specific incident that prompted me to make the decision to try to increase security around airports. But the overall conditions, it seemed to me, dictated that we do that.

And I think that this country has been very strong against terrorism through military action, imposing sanctions, stopping sanctions from being lifted, stopping terrorist incidents before they occur, arresting terrorists shortly after they commit acts. This is a part of our ongoing effort to protect the American people from that.

And, parenthetically. I would like to say I certainly wish the Congress would pass the antiterrorism legislation which was promised to me on Memorial Day. That would also help us in this regard.

Q In going after teenage smoking, Mr. President, did you consider including alcohol abuse as part of that? I know you mentioned drunk driving in your opening remarks, but alcohol among young people is thought to be as much of a problem as smoking is.

THE PRESIDENT: First of all, it is far less accessible. It's harder to get. What we have advocated there, and I hope the Congress will adopt, is a national zero tolerance for alcohol among young drivers. If we go to zero tolerance among young drivers, I think it will make a difference. Now, I noted last week and I would like to give the state credit for it -- one state adopted zero tolerance this last week. We are now up to 27 states that have done it on their own. But I think zero tolerance is the best thing to do.

Q Mr. President, there's a move on Capitol Hill among some right-wing senators -- Faircloth of North Carolina and also joined by -- and D'Amato, of course, New York -- and several left-wing Democrats, real liberal left-wing Democrats to try to get you out of office this month. They're going to try to do that by embarrassing you so that you will resign. Would you resign your office under any circumstances? (Laughter.)

THE PRESIDENT: Well, if you promise to run off with me, I might. (Laughter.) But otherwise I can't think of any reason. (Laughter.)

Q Mr. President, continuing on the political mien, if we might. (Laughter.) A year from now the Republican presidential convention opens. Looking at the electoral vote now, it seems to be a lot of political experts say that you're in trouble in the South, in trouble in the West, it's really going to be an uphill battle for reelection. How do you assess your position at this time?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, first of all, I don't think my position at this time amounts to anything because the world will turn around. At this time when I started running for President -- I hadn't even declared for President this time four years ago, and everybody said the incumbent President could not be defeated. So I don't think anyone knows and I think all this is idle speculation.

I will tell you this: I have done my best to do what I said I would do when I ran. This is the second anniversary of our economic plan. We passed our reconciliation bill on this day two years ago. Theirs is still not passed. And the people who are now in charge of the Congress said that it would be the end of the world, we would have a terrible recession, it would bankrupt the country, it would be awful. And two years later, we have seven million jobs, two and half million new homeowner, one and half million new small businesses -- a record -- a record number of new self-made millionaires, a very high stock market, very low inflation.

Now, this is the first time in history we've had this kind of surge that hasn't also raised the incomes of ordinary people because of the new realities which we face. So now, economic policy must be seen as a two-step, not a one-step, process. We've got to grow the economy and raise incomes. That's why I want to raise the minimum wage. That's why I want to give every unemployed worker or under-employed worker the right to two years of education at the local community college. That's why I'm trying to have a tax cut that's focused on child rearing and education -- to raise incomes.

But I believe when the record of this administration is made, in every area -- whether it's this, or in fighting crime, or protecting the environment, or educating our people, or trying to prepare the world for the end of the post-Cold War era and a new era of cooperation -- I believe the American people will listen and then they'll make their own judgments about it. But I don't think anybody can know what's going to happen a year and a half from now.

Q Mr. President, are you sure you wouldn't like to pledge today not to smoke cigars anymore to set an example?
(Laughter.)

THE PRESIDENT: Well, you mean should I go from five or six down to zero a year? Maybe so. But I don't think that's the point. The point I want to make is, number one, cigars and pipes were not found by the FDA to be part of this. Did you know that?

Number two, the issue is, for me -- I try to set a good example. I try never to do it when people see -- I admitted that I did do it when Captain O'Grady was found because I was so happy. It was a form of celebration. But I don't think you should let that become the issue. The issue is whether the children are smoking cigarettes in this country.

Q Mr. President, on the French nuclear testing, the French are now saying they will agree to a zero threshold for nuclear tests in the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. Will the U.S. concur? Do you think the French should cancel their tests? And very importantly, has the U.S. agreed to share technology with the French so that they can develop their own computer simulations and not have to test?

THE PRESIDENT: I applaud the French statement today. It will make it much easier for us to get a comprehensive test ban. I do not think they should resume testing, but they know that. That's a difference between us and them, and most of the rest of the world and them. And we will have a statement about our own policy in the very near future, but I don't want to make it today.

Q Mr. President, the steps that you outlined today are tailored very carefully to curb the sale of tobacco to young people. My question is, if they're implemented, will the FDA retain power that would allow them at a future date to ban or curb sale of tobacco to adults?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, of course, that's what the tobacco I guess. Our belief is that this is a pediatric disease. This is a problem for children; that when tobacco is lawful, it would be wrong for a government agency to try to in any way the access of adults to it -- if it is lawful. So the answer is, I don't know what the law would be because, in this case, I'm not the lawyer for the agency. I can't give you a lawful answer. I can tell you that the policy of this government is that the focus should be on our children -- their health and their welfare. That is the focus.

If there is a worry underlying the question you asked, there is an answer to that worry -- put it in the law. Let's have the tobacco companies come in, let's talk to the members of Congress from the tobacco-growing states. Let's pass it into law. Pass these restrictions. Put them into law. Do it now. Then we won't have all

these lawsuits, and we will begin immediately -- right now -- to protect the children of this country. That is the answer.

Q Mr. President, there has been a parade of you and your wife's friends, associates, aides, former aides on Capitol Hill lately in both the Senate and House Whitewater hearings. How does it make you feel to see so many of your old friends and associates being grilled, in effect? And have you been keeping track of the hearings, and, if so, how?

THE PRESIDENT: The answer to the second question is, not really. Occasionally I see a clip or something, but I don't watch television very much, except late at night for a few minutes before I go to bed. So I haven't had a chance to keep up with it. My impression is that they have all acquitted themselves quite well, and I've been proud of them. But I don't have anything to say on the underlying substance beyond what I've already said.

Q Mr. President, on the FDA rule again. A coalition of advertisers is filing suit today saying that for a legal product, your rule would go far beyond any precedent in restricting First Amendment rights. Is there any precedent that you could cite that would be equivalent in its reach into the First Amendment? And, if not, are you not concerned about that aspect?

THE PRESIDENT: First of all, nobody who's ever held this office loved the First Amendment any more than I do. And no one has ever felt both edges of it any more than I have. I believe in the First Amendment. That's what my speech about religious freedom was about the other day. I believe in it.

But I would remind you of just a few basic facts. It is illegal for children to smoke cigarettes. How then can it be legal for people to advertise to children to get them to smoke cigarettes? And does anybody seriously doubt that a lot of this advertisement is designed to reach children so we get new customers for the tobacco companies as the old customers disappear? It cannot be a violation of the freedom of speech in this country to say that you cannot advertise to entice people to do something which they cannot legally do. So I just don't buy the First Amendment argument, it's just not true.

And by the way, that is why -- to go back to an earlier question -- the FDA ran the risk of having a rather complex rule to make it clear that there should be some freedom left, some considerable freedom left to advertise to adults.

Yes, ma'am.

Q Mr. President, your administration has said on many occasions that you're going to adhere to the one-China policy. However, the two sides of Taiwan's fate obviously have different views on what this one China is. And you are the one who made the decision to allow President Teng-hui to come to the United States, and China is very, very unhappy now. So I wonder, how are you going to balance between a democratic Taiwan willing to risk everything to seek international recognition, and on the other hand, the very, very important strategic interests between the United States and China?

THE PRESIDENT: First of all, we're going to balance them by continuing to adhere to the one-China policy. It is the policy of the United States; it has been for years; it continues to be.

Secondly, we are going to do everything we can to make sure that our policy is clearly understood in China and in Taiwan. I made the decision personally to permit President Li from Taiwan to come into this country not as the head of state, not as the head of a government that we had recognized, but because he wanted to come -- I'm sure there were political aspects to this, but he asked whether he could come to his college reunion, whether he could give speeches, whether he could travel in our United States. He is a law-abiding person. We had no grounds on which to deny him.

In the American culture there is a constitutional right to travel and a constitutional right to speak. And as a man who has almost never missed any of his high school or college reunions, I just felt I ought to give him the same opportunity. It was not an abrogation of our one-China policy in any way. It was a recognition of something that's special in our culture about the rights we accord individuals who obey our laws and comport themselves appropriately.

Q Mr. President, as you know, the welfare reform bill has been delayed in the Senate. I wonder how optimistic you are that welfare reform can pass this year and to what extent welfare reform has been wrapped up in Republican presidential politics.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, it plainly has been wrapped up to some extent in Republican presidential politics, and that's bad because 85 percent of the American people want it. As I think Senator

Dole acknowledged a day or so ago, I made a personal appeal to him to try to work with me to get a welfare reform bill out and to do it this year.

What do we want out of welfare reform? We want work. We want time limits. We want responsible parenting. Those are the three things we want. Can we get there from where we are? I think we can. I think that Senator Dole has moved somewhat away from the extreme right of his party. Senator Daschle, Senator Mikulski and Senator Breaux have offered a bill which has united the Democrats in moving away from the conventional wisdom toward welfare reform. And what we need to do over this break is that folks need to get together and figure out how we can put these approaches together and come out with a bill which promotes work, which promotes time limits, which promotes responsible parenting. I cannot believe we can't reach an agreement here.

Meanwhile, I will keep trying to get more states involved. You know, I have 32 states now that I've given permission to get out from under the federal rules to promote welfare reform. And I would remind you I have offered all 50 states within 30 days the right to require young teen mothers to stay at home and stay in school to get checks, to put time limits and work requirements on welfare reform, and to allow the states to convert the welfare benefits and the food stamp benefits into wage supplements to get private employers to hire people in the private sector. Every state in the country could do that within the next 30 days. They just call us and send a request; we do it.

So we'll keep working, but we need the legislation, especially because we have to have national standards for child support enforcement that we cannot implement without the law.

I think our time is -- one more question. Yes, go ahead.

Q Before the tobacco regulations came up this news conference was billed as your chance to give a farewell message to Congress. If you could send them a postcard from Jackson next week -- (laughter) -- what would you list as your top three or four priorities?

THE PRESIDENT: We need to pass a decent budget that balances the budget, but doesn't do it on the backs of elderly people who don't have enough to live on by exploding their Medicare costs; it doesn't walk away from our commitment to education -- the education of our young people from Head Start to more affordable college loans through National Service -- that doesn't undermine our common commitment to the environment. We can find common ground on this budget that brings the American people together and moves us forward.

The second thing I would say is, we need to pass welfare reform. We need to pass welfare reform -- work, time limits, responsible parenting.

The third thing I would say is, let's get to work on the unfinished agenda here -- pass the antiterrorism bill, the line-item veto, appoint the political reform commission. Let's get after it. Let's do the things that we all are for, we keep saying we're for. Let's deliver for the American people.

Let me say in closing that my family and I are leaving on Tuesday for Wyoming, and I want you to enjoy your vacation. Thank you and God bless you. (Applause.)

END

2:16 P.M. EDT

MORE

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

August 8, 1995

PRESS BRIEFING
BY EPA ADMINISTRATOR CAROL BROWNER

The Briefing Room

10:25 A.M. EDT

MR. MCCURRY: And a cheerful good morning to all of you.

Q Good morning.

MR. MCCURRY: Good morning. We've started at an unusual hour today because of the schedule with the President's trip to south Baltimore today. Since he's going up and you don't come back until late this afternoon, I thought it would be useful for us to do a little preemptive briefing on the President's action today. So that's why we are gathered at this unusually early hour, for which I extend my apologies to all except Helen Thomas, who would have been here anyhow.

The President today will act, using his presidential authority, to protect the country, protect the nation's environment at a time when Congress seems determined to eviscerate all those laws on the books that are designed to protect the health and safety of Americans and protect the pristine quality of our environment. He believes he can use his executive power today, acting by executive order, to ensure that those who emit toxic chemicals into communities continue to report and disclose those emissions as they have been required to do since 1986 under passage of the Community Right To Know Act.

The President's executive order today will require those who would do business with the federal government to continue to report on over 650 toxic chemicals that are emitted. He will also instruct the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to expedite rulemaking on other areas, including facilities and other chemical use that could broaden the scope of the executive order that he will outline today.

I thought it would be useful for you to have a chance to ask Administrator Browner some questions. I'll tell those of you who are departing at 11:00 a.m. that we will have a lot of background material and some papers available on the bus. We don't intend to make it available here at the White House until later in the day to reward those who are enlightened enough to journey with the President today. And even though we are doing this briefing now, I would encourage all of you, of course, to put the focus on the President's remarks later in the day. He will be making the news. We will just be helping you understand what that news is. So with that admonishment --

Q Are you coming back afterwards?

MR. MCCURRY: No, I'll come back at the end of this if you've got some other areas you want to get into. It's a great pleasure to welcome to the briefing room the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency Carol Browner.

MORE

ADMINISTRATOR BROWNER: As Mike said, later today the President will announce a series of decisive actions to guarantee that every American, that every community has the right to know about toxic chemicals in their neighborhoods. While we have seen the polluters using their lobbying powers to create special exemptions in bill after bill, provision after provision on the Hill, the President is using his executive powers to protect the health and environment of the American people.

The budget that the House has passed for EPA includes a 34-percent cut in resources available to EPA. It removes all funds for drinking water systems. It includes a 50-percent cut in our enforcement dollars, diminishing our ability to take criminal actions against polluters. It significantly reduces monies available for clean water to protect our rivers, lakes and streams. And it shifts the responsibilities of who pays to clean up the toxic dump sites of this country.

Included in the EPA appropriations bill are 18 riders, specific prohibitions against our ability to act, to adopt standards, to enforce environmental laws, to enforce environmental regulations, including a prohibition on adopting or enforcing standards for petroleum refineries and their toxic air emissions, for hazardous waste incineration; restrictions on our ability to enforce provisions of the Clean Water Act -- when taken together, essentially shuts down the Clean Water Act.

Perhaps most pernicious among the riders is a rider that would essentially limit my ability to guarantee that the people of this country will know about toxic chemicals in their communities, in their neighborhoods. When this law was passed in 1986 -- perhaps one of the most important environmental laws ever passed, signed by President Reagan, subsequently strengthened by President Bush -- the American people were promised three things.

First, they would know toxic chemical emissions in their neighborhood -- what's coming out of the smokestack, what's going into the water, what's happening in their community. Secondly, the EPA Administrator would be allowed to add to the list of chemicals reported, the list of facilities covered, and ultimately, to require reporting on the chemicals used -- not just what's coming out, but what is going in.

The rider does damage to each of those provisions. It essentially puts in serious jeopardy the chemicals that the Clinton administration added in December of this year. Since the beginning of the program in 1986, there have been over 200 chemicals on the list -- I'm sorry -- 329 chemicals on the original list. In December of this year, the administration added 286 chemicals, giving the American people more information about toxic chemical emissions in their neighborhood. The rider puts that in jeopardy. The President is using his executive authorities to ensure that the American people will continue to know about those chemicals, that the ones this administration added to the list, that the information will be available.

The rider also does damage to my ability to add facilities to the list. I announced over a year and a half ago that I thought more facilities should be required to tell the American people what they are doing in their neighborhoods. The rider puts that in serious jeopardy. The President today is directing me to move expeditiously to complete the work on adding facilities to the list, to make sure that we have all of the facilities which we think should be telling the American people about their toxic chemical emissions on the list, further guaranteeing the public's right to know.

Finally, I have announced that I would begin the process of looking at how to report to the American people the chemicals used, what's being brought to the facility -- not just what's being sent out of the facility into the air and the water, but let's get a complete picture for the people of this country of toxic chemical use and emissions. The President is directing me to expedite the development of a use-reporting program to give all of us the full picture we need as a country to guarantee strong public health and environmental protections. And he is saying that he will continue all of his authorities to put in place an insurance policy -- a creature joining us for the environment, right -- to put in place, if necessary, a second executive order should Congress continue its efforts, vis a vis the riders, to take away the public's right to know.

So he is taking three actions today. First, signing an executive order saying if you do business with the government you will report to the American public 651 chemical emissions; directing me to expedite a rulemaking to complete an addition of facilities to the reporting requirement and development of a use program; and third, saying to Congress, if you continue this attack on the public's right to know, I will sign a second executive order expanding facilities, guaranteeing use information, requiring those who do business with the government to inform the citizens of this country about their toxic chemical use.

Q What are the conditions under which he will sign the second order? I'm not sure I understand.

ADMINISTRATOR BROWNER: The second order, the promise of the second order, it's an insurance policy. This is about saying to the American people that I think this right to know is so important and sending a signal to Congress about how important we believe these rights are -- that I will make sure that I use every authority available to me should Congress continue this reckless disregard of the public's right to know -- this effort to roll back access to information on behalf of the American people.

Q Carol, can I ask, how precisely does this executive order countermand whatever was in the rider? And was there any discussion within the administration about whether it wasn't just better to veto these bills in the House than risk this dueling battle of executive orders and more riders and --

ADMINISTRATOR BROWNER: Well, the President is very clear. He has said, Leon Panetta has said, Mike McCurry has said, he will veto the EPA appropriations bill. But he wants to be very clear with the American people that while this program is being jeopardized by Congress, he will use his authorities to ensure their right to know. And he is putting a premium on access to information for the American people. He's taking out an insurance policy and he's sending a signal to Congress which is, look, we'll work with you to craft a responsible budget for EPA if you will recognize that the American people have a right to know that these riders do serious damage to environmental and public health protections, and that we will not tolerate them.

Q What specifically about this latest rider and its effect on the emissions disclosure requirements -- where does his authority come from to do that, and what precisely is he countermanding?

ADMINISTRATOR BROWNER: Well, the authority he's using for the executive order is government procurement. He's saying if you choose to do business with the government then we're going to ask you to inform the American people.

Q So now this would apply to all industries, and he will make it apply to people who are government contractors through his executive order?

ADMINISTRATOR BROWNER: The original law passed in 1986 included a list of chemicals and a list of facilities covered. The facilities covered are largely manufacturing type facilities. There's approximately 20 types of facilities covered. Those two lists actually came from state laws that were in place at the time -- the Maryland and New Jersey laws were the source of those lists.

When I came, and when the President came to office, we said we were going to expand the public's right to know. We thought it was so important. And so the first thing we did was add chemicals to the list, the 286 chemicals that I added in December. That was our first step. Our second step, which we are currently engaged in and we would complete in the next 12 months but for the rider, is to add facilities to the list -- to say that while there are 20 types of facilities covered today, we think there are others, there are other types of industrial facilities that should be reporting to the public. That is an activity we have underway that Congress is seeking to block.

And then the third thing I said that I would do, again to give people access to information, is to develop a use program; to say not only what are you putting out, but what are you taking in. We need as a country the entire snapshot of chemical use so I can make wise regulatory decisions; so that industry can make pollution prevention decisions, which is if there's two ways to make a widget and one uses less chemicals than another they can make that kind of informed decision. And so we have been working on each of these expansions of the program. And Congress is seeking to stop or block or diminish them.

What the President is saying today is in response to each of those. In response to the chemicals expansion in December, he's saying, first of all, I'll veto it; but in the meantime, I think this is so important, and I want to protect the public's right to know that I will sign an executive order saying that anyone doing business with the government on the current facilities list shall always have a right to -- a requirement to report the chemicals they emit.

But, secondly, in the directive, he is telling me to expedite the process I am now engaged in, the rulemaking process for facilities expansion and development of a use program. And then, third, he is saying, if need be -- Congress, I'm sending you a signal -- if need be, I will sign another executive order to guarantee facilities expansion and a use program. There's a simple way to solve this. Take these out.

Q What is this for --

ADMINISTRATOR BROWNER: For government procurement. Right.

Q What percentage of manufacturers and facilities that are now covered by the law would the executive order cover? Are there some who would escape reporting requirements?

ADMINISTRATOR BROWNER: Not under the President's action. Under the Congress's action -- absolutely. People would come out.

Q Under the President's action, there isn't a polluter or a so-called polluter in the country that does not do business with the government that could escape the reporting requirements?

ADMINISTRATOR BROWNER: Under the President's action, the executive order, facilities -- certain types of facilities doing business with the government will be required to report on 651.

Q What proportion are not doing business with the government?

Q How many more facilities are there in the country that do not do business with the government?

ADMINISTRATOR BROWNER: There are, right now, reporting -- there are 24,000 facilities that are reporting right now.

Q How many of those will the President's order cover?

ADMINISTRATOR BROWNER: We will get you an answer on that.

Q Doesn't all of this assume that you --

Q This approach based on procurement was the same one the President used with striker replacement and it's having trouble in the courts. How confident are you that the courts will uphold this?

ADMINISTRATOR BROWNER: Well, I am very confident. This is not the first time that President Clinton has used his executive powers to expand and to ensure the public's right to know. He signed an executive order requiring federal facilities for the first time ever to report their chemical emissions. And we are moving ahead with the successful implementation of that program. We have not ended up in a litigation, as you suggest.

I think that when it comes to procurement, obviously, we would rather see these rules applied across all industry. But the President believes, on balance, that if he can secure it -- if this is the only way to secure it for the American people in light of what the Congress is doing, then he will look to procurement.

Q And let me just to make sure I'm clear. The riders that you object to roll back the expansions during the Clinton administration. They don't affect the original facilities and chemicals covered in the '86 --

ADMINISTRATOR BROWNER: That is correct. They do damage to the three commitments that this administration made -- chemical expansion, facility expansion, use reporting.

Q But this is so much political theatre, isn't it? I mean, if he's going to veto the legislation, the expansion will take place regardless of the executive order.

ADMINISTRATOR BROWNER: This is an insurance policy to make sure that the public's right to know is preserved, number one. And it is a signal to Congress -- that's exactly right. What he's saying to Congress is, look, I think this is a fundamental right, and I am going to use all of my executive authorities, I'm going to have EPA work even faster than they already are to guarantee an expanded right to know. It was a commitment I made to the American people, and I will take out an insurance policy.

Q To follow on that question, though, this thing passed the House by, what, one vote? It's given no chance in the Senate, and the President said he would veto it. You're acting like it's already the law, but my understanding is it has no chance of being the law.

ADMINISTRATOR BROWNER: Well, the President is very clear that he will veto it. This is an insurance policy. It is a signal to the Senate that we won't tolerate these kind of riders, these kind of reductions in EPA resources. We have long enjoyed bipartisan support in the work that we do at EPA. The vast majority of strong environmental laws in this country were signed into law by Republican Presidents. There is a way to resolve these differences that doesn't result in every environmental statute being rolled back, that doesn't result in a 34-percent cut in EPA's resources.

People should make no mistake about it, when you go back to January and come forward and look at the actions taken in both the House and the Senate, this is a concerted, orchestrated effort to shut down EPA, to make sure that we cannot set another standard, that we cannot give people access to information so they can work in their communities to ensure a decrease in the toxic emissions.

Q What kind of public outcry have you had against these moves in Congress? And is there any kind -- there seems to be a real silence out there in terms of the warnings on the clean air, clean water, and so forth.

ADMINISTRATOR BROWNER: Well, actually -- I will speak from my personal experiences as I have traveled across the country. I have seen large numbers of people who are very concerned about the rollback, about the efforts of the special interests in creating special exemptions, special loopholes. And I think you can see that in terms of the votes. If you look at the large number of Republicans joining with a majority of the Democrats in opposition to these extreme measures, it has been growing over time. We had 50, 51 people voting against these riders that were ultimately reattached. They were once struck and then they were reattached. You see a growing number of people in both the House and the Senate who are very concerned about just how dramatic these proposals are.

Mr. Dole's regulatory reform bill -- he's tried cloture three times now, and he hasn't been able to invoke cloture and apparently has now rejected a very reasonable and modest proposal in terms of changes put forward by the Democrats so that we can advance a regulatory reform package.

Q Is all of this from industry, the pressure from industry because of the cost in implementing?

ADMINISTRATOR BROWNER: I think it's a combination of issues with industry. But I think what we now see, unfortunately, is nothing short of a feeding frenzy. And what's happening is those industries that didn't come into compliance, those industries that didn't make the investment on behalf of the American people to protect their air, their water, their health, are suddenly getting out of any requirements, being released of any obligation. It's an unlevel playing field that's being created. Someone did the right thing; they complied with the law; and suddenly, their competitor goes up to Congress and gets a special exemption. That's not fair to industry and it's not fair to the American people.

Q Administrator Browner, I'm still not clear on what the second executive order would do or why the President doesn't simply sign it instead of threatening to sign it.

ADMINISTRATOR BROWNER: Let me explain why. We are right now at EPA engaged in a rulemaking process. What that means is we're talking to industry, to environmentalists about which facilities to add in the expansion, about how to develop a use program that makes sense. We want to continue in that process. We believe -- I believe, the President believes -- that a non-adversarial rulemaking process results in the common sense kind of programs necessary to protect the health of the American people. But

what Congress does in their riders is essentially shut those processes down. It prevents us from the dialogue necessary to making wise and informed decisions.

And so what the President is saying to industry and to Congress -- I'm going to ask Carol Browner, I'm going to direct her to continue that dialogue on an expedited basis because I think getting this done is so important. But if you continue in your efforts, then I will sign an executive order because you have denied EPA the right to adopt the rule to complete the process and adopt the rule -- I will sign an executive order. He is leveling the playing field. He is ensuring that at every turn the public's right to know about more chemicals for more facilities and the use of chemicals will be ensured, will be protected.

Q The implication is by continuing the dialogue, industries are better off and more likely to get their points of view understood. Is that --

ADMINISTRATOR BROWNER: That will more likely to be able to craft a common-sense program that results in the appropriate information being available to the public. It always works better when we can work with all stake-holders -- environmentalists, industry, state, local government.

Congress -- and in many of these riders, we see this -- they are denying our ability to work in a common-sense manner because they don't ultimately want us to provide the protections. And in many other instances, we see a further curtailment of access to information for the American people. For example, one of the riders says that states that have adopted what are called audit programs, they would be allowed to shield from the public criminal violations of pollution laws. We see that across --

Q Under the executive order, federal contractors that do not comply with this, are you then saying they will be debarred? Will their contracts be suspended? Is there teeth in this executive order?

ADMINISTRATOR BROWNER: Yes, there's a provision in the executive order that empowers the contracting department, the contracting agency to take action if the contractor does not comply with the executive order. There's a provision in there.

Q As things now stand, will anything change as a result of the President's executive order? Will anything be different about reporting tomorrow than it was yesterday?

ADMINISTRATOR BROWNER: What will change is the protection, the guarantee to the American people that their right to know will be preserved, number one, and will be expanded. We can do it through my rulemaking process, which is what the directive is. And if Congress shuts down or does damage to that, then the President will act with a second executive order.

Q But there's no real -- there's no immediate effect from this executive order, is that right? Nothing changes.

ADMINISTRATOR BROWNER: Well, it ensures that those people contracting with the government, the facilities contracting with the government will report regardless of what may happen.

Q Are you saying they face suspension or --

ADMINISTRATOR BROWNER: I'm not a procurement expert. We can give you the paragraph on that. We can show it to you.

Q The Republicans don't have the votes to override a veto. So when you call this an insurance policy, aren't you ensuring

against the President signing the bill? I mean, how else could this happen?

ADMINISTRATOR BROWNER: No. This is, one, guaranteeing the American people the right to know. Two -- this is very important -- look at the directive telling us to go much more quickly to expand this program. That's a very bold action on the part of the President. There are clearly people who oppose the expansion of the program. And what the President is saying is, I believe in the fundamental right of the people to know, and I am directing EPA to act more quickly. And if for some reason EPA should be blocked, then I will respond with a second executive order.

In each instance, the President is speaking directly to the damage that Congress seeks to do in our appropriations bill, and, quite frankly, in other parts of the rollback we see in the activities undertaken by the Republicans.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END

10:52 A.M. EDT

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

August 7, 1995

PRESS BRIEFING
BY MIKE MCCURRY

The Briefing Room

12:43 P.M. EDT

MR. MCCURRY: And a happy Monday to all of you, and welcome to the White House for our daily briefing. Let me start first with the President's meeting this morning with Prime Minister Jean-Claude Juencker of Luxembourg. They had a very positive and constructive 35 minutes that reviewed the current status of U.S.-Luxembourg bilateral relations and also issues involving the European Union in anticipation of Luxembourg's ascendancy to the EU presidency in the second half of 1997.

In the discussion of bilateral economic issues, the President reviewed the status of an investment that Luxembourg has in Arkansas. The Prime Minister had been down to Arkansas to visit -- it's a plant in Arkansas that produces steel for steel-bolted radials. Okay, I can see you're not paying any attention. (Laughter.) This is the Trefil ARBED Steel Plant in Pine Bluff, which the Prime Minister visited and which the President was happy to share reflections on the importance of that investment as it relates to our bilateral economic relations.

Okay, if you want any more on that -- let me do one other thing. With the Senate opening the welfare reform debate, I think you've all now seen our statement of administration policy and you know how strongly the President feels about changing welfare as we know it. But if we're going to end welfare as we know it, we've got to put work at the center of any reform and we've got to be prepared to require welfare dependents to earn a paycheck and not just receive the welfare check.

The President sees an opportunity to work in a bipartisan fashion with the Congress insofar as Democrats and Republicans want to move towards the goal of requiring work and doing it in a responsible and reasonable way. To date, the debate in the Senate, unfortunately, has been a debate about ideological litmus tests, and Republicans in the Senate are being asked to toe the line from the extreme in the Republican Party. That's not going to produce welfare reform. It's going to produce measures like the variant Senator Dole's bill, which, by judgment of the Congressional Budget Office, would require 44 out of 50 states to fail the test in providing work. In short, the bill before the Senate, Senator Dole's bill, is phony when it comes to work.

The President's objectives in welfare reform are very clear. He wants to require recipients to work for benefits. He wants to require them to work and have opportunities for child care so that someone takes care of the children while welfare recipients are working. He wants to require teenage mothers to live at home and stay in school. He wants to require delinquent parents to pay child support. He wants to require welfare recipients to sign a work contract, as they do in many states that are now experimenting with welfare reform. And he wants states to pay their fair share when they are moving people from welfare dependency into work situations.

MORE

Those are changes that are going to require a much more serious debate than the Congress has presented thus far. But those types of changes can result in a welfare reform proposal that the President will be happy to sign here at the Rose Garden, as opposed to producing a measure that the President would ultimately have to veto.

Q Why is it that the view of the administration that it should be up to the federal government to ensure that welfare recipients work?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, because the federal government has a very strong interest, because it provides assistance to states, in making sure that the long-term future of the welfare system is one that leads to economic growth and participation by welfare recipients in the economic life of the nation and not just more and more dependency; not just a cycle of generation after generation requiring a welfare check in order to achieve daily subsistence.

Q You're not willing to leave it to the states?

MR. MCCURRY: States have -- we are willing to give the states a great deal of flexibility, as the President told the National Governors Association recently. States are beginning to experiment. The President's willing to liberalize the provision of waivers to state governments so they can continue to experiment with measures that will make that transition from welfare to work a reality. So we see a lot of common sense at the local level. But at the same time, the federal government has a very strong interest in making sure that ending welfare will end it nationally in all 50 states, and do so in a way that will produce long-term economic benefits for all taxpayers.

Q How do you see where it stands now? Is there some movement --

MR. MCCURRY: Well, right now, it's caught -- right now, the debate itself is caught in a very strong ideological divide on the Republican side, as various groups and outside interests require ideological litmus tests of Republican senators, some of whom have a very strong interest in living here at the White House someday. And that is -- (laughter) -- that is, frankly, been an impediment to the type of real reform measure that could achieve the bipartisan approach to welfare reform that the President believes is available and attainable.

Q How do you ensure that each state pays its fair share?

MR. MCCURRY: Excuse me?

Q How do you ensure that each state would pay their share?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, that has been a good subject of discussion between the governors and the President. And they've talked about how maintenance of effort is possible if we make sure that we're not using welfare reform as a guise to just achieve budget cuts that will then ultimately be used for other purposes, for example, tax cuts for the very wealthy in America. There are ways that you can do this. We believe we've put forward a very strong proposal.

The President's got very clear ideas on welfare reform that we set out not only today in the statement of administration policy, but we set out in our work over the last two years to achieve welfare reform. And I believe that that can be done in a way that

preserves states the option to maintain the effort currently required.

Q Mike, do you suppose before this year is out there will be a Republican proposal that this White House disagrees with that you won't characterize as extreme, that you'll say we just disagree with it?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, when it's something that is just an honest disagreement, sure. We've had honest disagreements with them. We have one recently on the timber salvage provision of the rescissions bill. They started with extreme language on timber salvage, they modified their views, and we ended up with something that was signable. (Laughter.)

Q Even though you say you're willing to work with the Republicans, it sounds like you're laying the ground work for a possible presidential veto here.

MR. MCCURRY: We're laying the ground work for putting a lot of heat on members of the Senate, especially on the Republican side, so that they can get down to the serious business of welfare reform. And the President believes that we will continue to keep that heat on because the American people are very clear what they want to see done with welfare. They want the current system ended. They want the transition from welfare dependency to work to occur. And they want to do that in a way that doesn't penalize the children who need to have access to child care if the parent or parents are going to work.

Q So I guess he wouldn't veto it then.

MR. MCCURRY: Well, look, we are clear enough in what we say on the Dole bill today. We want a bill that the President can sign. We're not interested in vetoing the welfare reform measure because the President truly believes that that's an area where we can achieve bipartisan consensus and do it quickly. But in order for that to happen there's going to have to be a lot more seriousness of purpose applied to this debate as the Senate begins to take up the subject.

Q You seem to agree on a number of provisions already in the Dole plan, like the tougher child support enforcement, making teen mothers stay home -- that sort of thing. It sounds like the thing that you're going to press the veto on is this block-granting method. Are they going to have to change that in order to come to some kind of agreement with the White House?

MR. MCCURRY: They're going to have to satisfy a lot of the points of criticism raised by the President today in our statement of policy. It's clear that among those are making sure that funding as it's available to the states can ensure that children are not left behind as a parent or parents make the transition to work from welfare.

But we're a long ways away from knowing what the final contours of that bill will be. What we suggest is that a much better starting place, as opposed to Senator Dole's bill, a much better starting place is the very good Democratic alternative which the President strongly supports -- the work first proposal that's been put forward by Senators Daschle, Breaux and Mikulski.

Q The Speaker yesterday had some very harsh comments about President Clinton, saying, one, he should fire Ron Brown; two, that every time the President wants to deflect the attention from Whitewater, he issues another executive order. Do you have any reaction to the Speaker's comments?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, on the first -- look, speaking of deflecting attention, the Speaker, every opportunity he has to do something positive about political reform and changing the way business gets done in Washington he tries to change the subject. He needs to get serious about this. He's promised the President that he would be serious. He shook hands with the President of the United States in New Hampshire, and he can't somehow or other try to change the nature of that agreement. It was there. It was live. It was on videotape. It's time for the President and the Speaker to move forward on the political reform measure that they agreed to in New Hampshire. And it would be far more useful for the Speaker, rather than try to change the subjects or bring in extraneous issues, to sit down and write the letter that he's promised the President that sets forth his views on political reform.

As you know, we're moving ahead anyhow. The President's going to go ahead and do what he can through executive action to bring true lobby reform to Washington for the first time, so that those in the administration who are lobbied at least have the benefit of knowing, and the public will have the benefit of knowing who the people are and what they're being paid for to lobby about.

Q And on Ron Brown?

MR. MCCURRY: It's just an extraneous issue. It has nothing to do with the subject of political reform.

Q Wait a minute. The question stands, though, Mike. I mean, you either have something to say about it or you don't. The context of what Gingrich said yesterday was not political reform, it was something else. And you're being asked about that. You're not being asked in the context of political reform.

MR. MCCURRY: The President is fully supportive of Ron Brown, as you know.

Q What was the result of the meeting today on Bosnia?

MR. MCCURRY: The President and his principal foreign policy advisors met for just under an hour today on the subject of Bosnia, but more broadly defined, the situation in the former Yugoslavia across all the former Yugoslavia, in light of the recent Croatian offensive into the Krajina region. The principals agreed it was very important to take into account the dynamic that exists on the ground now; very important to move forward to see what could be done to achieve a political resolution of this conflict on the grounds that no further military action is likely to make matters better; that now is the time for the parties to come together and to begin serious discussions that will lead to a political settlement; and, as always, the Contact Group proposal should be the basis for a settlement.

That proposal has been accepted by the Bosnian government, has not been accepted by the Bosnian Serbs. And they explored ways in which they could begin to invigorate the diplomatic effort that might lead to a resolution of the conflict.

Q What about the Yeltsin initiative? Is the U.S. supportive of his call for talks in Moscow?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, we will consult further with the Russian Federation on that concept. We believe it is important for the parties to have dialogue, but the dialogue ought to be aimed at achieving acceptance of the Contact Group proposal which is one that is supported by the Russian Federation.

Q What kind of encouragement or assistance has the United States provided for the Croatian offensive?

MR. MCCURRY: None that I'm aware of.

Q And you spoke of invigorating the diplomatic initiative. How does the President see that happening?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, I think, first, it's important to take into account the views of our partners in this process, especially the Europeans. I wouldn't be surprised if the President has some further contact with his counterparts in coming days to explore our common understanding of what the situation is now on the ground.

I think that we've had positive discussions with the European Union's negotiator, Carl Bildt. We'll continue to look at what role the Contact Group can play. And as we develop a common approach with our European allies, we may have more to say later in the week.

Q The Perot people have issued a press release saying that McLarty not only will come down to Dallas but will also address the convention now on behalf of the President. What was the thinking behind the White House in that decision to get McLarty to speak to the convention?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, we've thought for some time that Mr. McLarty would be a good representative of the President's point of view. We had known that Senator Dodd was going to go as general chairman of the party, but one concern we have at this point is it's not clear what the Senate schedule will be as we get to the end of the week.

On Friday, I believe, the United We Stand organization is hearing a series of substantive presentations about issues that are very much on their agenda. And in that context, we thought it would be helpful if Mr. McLarty talked about some of the things this administration has done to positively address the agenda that many members in Mr. Perot's organization care deeply about.

Q Back on Bosnia, do you have a timetable for the veto on lifting the arms embargo?

MR. MCCURRY: I do not. I suspect it will be sometime this week, most likely later in the week. But I'll keep you posted as we know more.

Q Is that here? You've got it? It has arrived?

MR. MCCURRY: It is here. The enrolled bill arrived, I believe, Thursday night -- Friday night? Sometime just before the weekend.

Q Is the President going to use the trip this weekend to talk about his proposals for -- this week -- to talk about his proposals on tobacco?

MR. MCCURRY: It's clear to me that one way or another, in the context of his trip to North Carolina, that subject will come up. I don't know whether the President will address it directly or whether there will just be some general discussion of it. But we are looking now at ways in which we could move the President's thinking into a final decision. That requires a lot of work with lawyers, among others. And if he's able to address the subject on Wednesday, I wouldn't be surprised if he does so, but I'm not guaranteeing that that will be the subject of any major presentation.

Q Would he have any discussion on Jesse Helms?

MR. MCCURRY: Any discussion on Jesse Helms? Well, I -- None that I'm directly -- that I'm aware of. I don't -- I'm not aware of any plans for Senator Helms to attend the National Baptist Convention on Wednesday.

Q Does he have any sessions today or tomorrow with people on either side of this tobacco issue and-or elected representatives from states heavily affected?

MR. MCCURRY: I'll have to check. He's had a variety of conversations individually, both by phone and sometimes here in person in recent days, with people on, I would say, both sides of the issue. But I'll have to check his calendar to see if he plans any meetings in coming days. I know he would certainly be discussing that with his staff.

Q With who, Mike? Who's he --

MR. MCCURRY: Well, he's had an opportunity to talk to everyone from Congressman Waxman to Senator Ford on the subject. He, as you know -- wouldn't be surprised if he has discussion with some governors as well from the region. But I'll see if I can provide a more detailed list for you tomorrow.

Q Robert Novak alleges in his column that the Haitian President may be involved in some 80 assassinations of political opponents and says the U.S. Embassy is aware of such things.

MR. MCCURRY: I am told the State Department will be covering that subject in greater details today, but I'm not aware of any evidence to corroborate the claim that some 80 political murders have been perpetrated against anti-Aristide individuals. In that sense, we question the accuracy of that report today.

As a general comment, I'd say you have to look back at what the situation has been in Haiti in recent years. The level of violence there today is far less than it was during the years of the Junta. It's clear that violence persists and violence continues but the government of Haiti has given every representation to the United States government that it is attempting to address those conditions that lead to that type of political violence.

Q Well, have we tried to discuss -- you know --

MR. MCCURRY: Raise -- oh, yes --

Q -- investigate this problem?

MR. MCCURRY: We have had regular discussions with the government of Haiti about the importance of law enforcement, the importance professionalizing their police force and bringing better techniques of law enforcement to those who are keeping the peace. And we have, in many cases, specifically raised our concerns about individual acts of political violence.

Q But you have -- you don't think there is a validity to this charge?

MR. MCCURRY: We don't have any evidence to corroborate the claim that there have been these 80 deaths that are referred to.

Q That's not the same as not believing it then, is it?

MR. MCCURRY: It's saying that we don't have evidence to corroborate it.

Q What's the status of the government consideration of the merger of Westinghouse with CBS? Any government action that can take place, any comment by the President yet?

MR. MCCURRY: I have not seen anything here. The President did talk a little bit about telecommunications reform last week and that transcript is available. But that would be a Justice Department question principally. You might want to check and see whether they have anything to say.

Q Does the White House have an official statement of the capture in Colombia?

MR. MCCURRY: We do, but come back to that question in a minute or two while I find it here.

Q How about auto talks tomorrow?

MR. MCCURRY: Say again?

Q I mean auto accords -- signing.

MR. MCCURRY: I haven't had a -- I did not have chance to check with USTR on that.

Q Could you tell us what the environmental speech he's going to do in Baltimore tomorrow is all about?

MR. MCCURRY: I can tell you that the President is very concerned about some of the steps that are being taken to gut environmental protections that have been on the books now for 25 years plus, or at least the movement towards measures that have been on the minds of the American public for 25 years plus.

The attempts by this Republican majority to roll back the safeguards that exist to make sure that we have clean air and clean water take us back to the days before the original Earth Day back in 1970. And the President is going to address that subject tomorrow and talk about those things that he can do as President to reverse that type of attack upon a regulatory structure that has worked to make our air cleaner and to make our water safer.

Q Will he announce executive orders along the lines of his lobbying reform and welfare reform unilateral action?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, it sounds like you've got significant interest in the subject. You should go and find out. He might. (Laughter.)

Q We will go.

MR. MCCURRY: That will be tomorrow's news. Do you have a copy of that? Can you give me that?

Q What's today's, Mike? (Laughter.)

MR. MCCURRY: No, no, no. The other thing. What is today's news? Me standing here and keeping you all entertained while nothing else is going on.

Q Why did you put out this county-by-county report on Medicare? I mean, what is the --

MR. MCCURRY: To keep telling the American people what the consequences are for the Republican approach to Medicare cuts. They've got \$270 billion worth of cuts projected in Medicare that are going to be very, very costly. The Speaker found out today down in Cobb County, Georgia, how much its going to affect the 37,000-plus

Medicare beneficiaries in his state who are going to pay an average of \$3,200 per person, \$6,400 per couple over the course of the next seven years if their approach to Medicare and Medicaid savings is retained in the budget.

They are cutting the benefits of Medicare recipients in order to pay for tax cuts for the wealthy. And we are going to continue to make that argument in a variety of ways. And one of the ways we can do that is to sort of take our analysis of what this means for individual recipients geographically around the country, make sure they understand what the consequences are.

Q On tobacco, what contact, if any, has the administration had with the industry as the President decides what to do and where to go?

MR. MCCURRY: I'm not aware of any direct contact. But the industry is in very close contact with its supporters on Capitol Hill and within states of the tobacco-producing region. And the thinking of the industry, I think, has been characterized by those that the President has had discussions with and that the White House staff has been in discussion with.

Q Well, basically, what are they telling you?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, they're saying that -- I mean, it's fairly obvious that they are quite concerned about the effect of proposed rulemaking by the Food and Drug Administration and concerned about steps that would mandate any curbs on their ability to market their product.

Q On affirmative action the President sought industry views and corporate views on affirmative action. He keeps talking about trying to find common ground in terms of Republicans. Why not meet with industry representatives?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, I'm not aware that any meeting has been requested, but, in any event, the White House is satisfied that it has had good input from the industry. And I believe the industry most likely would confirm that they feel like their views have been presented in discussions here at the White House.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

MR. MCCURRY: Well, I want to go back on the -- you all know that the White House National Drug Policy Director hailed the arrest of Miguel Rodriguez. I would say in echoing that statement that the President is very satisfied that strong law enforcement has produced in this instance a very important step forward in the fight against narco trafficking. We will continue to work very closely with the government of Colombia to address drug enforcement activities so that the Cali Cartel and others will no longer be making progress as they attempt to export products here to the United States.

Jack, do you have one last one?

Q Yes, Mike. Is there a deadline by which you'll have to decide whether Mrs. Clinton is going to go to China?

MR. MCCURRY: Yes. Sometime before the beginning of the conference. (Laughter.) Thank you.

END

1:07 P.M. EDT

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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

August 1, 1995

PRESS AVAILABILITY OF THE PRESIDENT

The Briefing Room

11:17 A.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Good morning. Looking over the last few days, it is clear that this Congress is on the wrong track. I began the year hoping to make bipartisan progress on balancing the budget, on reducing paperwork, reforming regulation and welfare. And, therefore, I was very pleased last week when a bipartisan majority voted to reject the extreme anti-environment provisions adopted in the House committee. That was the right thing to do.

But then the lobbyists for the polluters went to work. They got the leadership of the House of Representatives to call the bill back up. And last night, in a remarkable exercise of special interest power, the House voted to gut environmental and public health protections. It was a stealth attack on our environment in the guise of a budget bill.

The bill would effectively end federal enforcement of the Clean Water Act and the Clean Air Act, a bill that my Republican predecessor said was his proudest legislative achievement. It allows poisons in our drinking water, raw sewage on our beaches, oil refineries to pollute, and limits a community's right to know what chemicals are toxic which are released in their neighborhoods. It would be bad for our children, our health and our environment.

This is Washington special interest politics at its most effective and at its worst. Even before the 17 special interest provisions were added, the bill had already dramatically undercut environmental protection by cutting environmental enforcement in half.

You don't need to damage the environment to balance the budget. Our budget demonstrates that, and the budget the American people get out of this session of Congress ought to demonstrate that. In the past few days, a battalion of lobbyists has swarmed Capitol Hill, exerting enormous pressure to save these loopholes. I said I would use the power of my office to help people, not polluters. I believe we can protect the environment and grow the economy.

So on this so-called environmental bill, my message to the American people should be very, very clear: Don't worry. We'll make common-sense reforms. But the minute this polluter's protection act hits my desk, I will veto it.

One of the most interesting things that has achieved not too much notice in the last few days is that while Congress has been taking care of the special interests, it's also taking care of itself. It is way behind schedule on virtually every budget bill, in the hope, apparently, of enforcing a choice at the end of this fiscal year between shutting the government down and adopting extreme budget cuts which will be bad for our country, bad for our economy, and bad for our future. Apparently, they don't even plan on letting the American people see their planned Medicare cuts until the last

MORE

possible minute. But one bill, wouldn't you know it, is right on schedule -- the bill that funds the Congress, its staff, and its operations.

I don't think Congress should take care of its own business before it takes care of the people's business. If the congressional leadership follows through on its plan to send me its own funding bill before it finishes work on the rest of the budget, I will be compelled to veto it.

I want to work with Congress to pass a balanced budget that protects the health and the security of the American people, a balanced budget that strengthens our economy and raises the incomes of our people and the future prospects of our children. But we have to remember in order to do this that all the special interests have to be subordinated to the broader public interest. That is not happening now, but we can still get things back on track. That's what I want to do, and I still ask, again, the Congress to work with me to do it.

Q Mr. President, your policies and your judgment calls appear to be under siege on Capitol Hill -- Waco, Whitewater, Bosnia, social programs and so forth. How debilitating has this been on you personally, on your administration, on the country? And, obviously, you're whistling in the dark if you think you're going to have common ground. (Laughter.)

THE PRESIDENT: I disagree. It's not been debilitating, it's been invigorating. And I wouldn't be so surprised. There are two significant things that -- I would say big issues -- that have become clear in the last few days. One is you can see who's in control in this Congress, who's in control of the people that compelled this unusual revolt on the environmental issues. You see the story on the NRA today -- no gun control measures will be voted out of committee or on the floor of the House. I'm sure glad we got the Brady Bill and the assault weapons ban first, and I still think we ought to have a ban on the cop-killer bullets.

You see -- we're investigating -- this Congress is investigating the AARP and letting the NRA run one of its own investigations. So you see who's in control. That's the first thing you see.

The second thing you see is more hopeful. There were, after all, 50 Republicans who broke ranks in the House and said that they would put the environment ahead of party. Senator Dole yesterday said that, in Vermont at the Governors Conference, that he wanted to pass a welfare reform bill free of the extremist provisions which the members of his Caucus, some of them, had demanded that he put on the welfare reform bill. And so we may be moving toward finding common ground in welfare reform.

So you see two things. You see who's in control, and it's not good. You see some people feeling uncomfortable about it, and we may be able to make some progress. And so I don't think we know what the outcome will be.

Q Mr. President, there's a report today that Mack McLarty said in a memo that there would be no significant action on Waco without White House approval. When did you know of the plan to tear-gas the compound, and did you personally approve it?

THE PRESIDENT: Mr. Mikva has said in the letter exactly what my role in that was, and it's consistent with what I've said all along. And I don't have anything new to add to that.

Q Mr. President, have you made a final decision that there will be no retaliation for the shoot-down of Captain O'Grady? And if so, why not?

THE PRESIDENT: I have no comment on that.

Q Mr. President, speaking of special interests, do you feel that the Speaker is dragging his feet on the bipartisan campaign finance reform commission? And what else are you willing to do to make sure that that happens?

THE PRESIDENT: Dragging his feet is an apt, but inadequate, description of what has happened. (Laughter.) I mean, we shook hands on that in New Hampshire. I thought it was a fairly simple deal. The man said -- the gentleman who asked us the question; he said, why don't you guys do a base closing commission. We said, okay. Five days later I wrote a letter to the Speaker. I didn't get an answer. Five weeks later, I wrote -- I said, again, okay, here are two people that are the kind of people that I would put on this commission, and I'd like for them to get with someone you designate, and we'll set it up -- Doris Kearns Goodwin and John Gardner. Those are pretty respectable Americans. So far, they have not gotten any response or had any success either.

So we're going to keep trying. I mean, I think that it is wrong to say you're going to do something and not do it. So I hope we can do it.

Q Have you met with them -- have you met with the two of them already, Goodwin and --

THE PRESIDENT: I have not, but we've obviously been in touch with them. And we're trying to -- we're going to keep pushing until we get an answer one way or the other. If the Speaker does not want to do this, he ought to say that he has no intention of doing it. But we shouldn't just let it hang out here. What we ought to do is to do it.

Q Mr. President, is there anything you or the First Lady could do to end all of the hearings on the continuing interest in the Whitewater business, especially in the aftermath of the Vince Foster suicide? For example, there's a proposal in Newsweek magazine by Joe Klein that Mrs. Clinton volunteer to testify before the committees to explain her role.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know what in the world we could do. I mean there's basically been this big -- you know, I don't have anything new to add. We've answered all the questions. There has been a \$3.6 million RTC investigation which basically says that what we said was there all the time. You know, no one questions, no serious person questions all the reports on whether Vince Foster committed suicide or not. I don't know what to do. I think these hearings will proceed and our people will cooperate and we'll just see what happens.

Q Mr. President, we know that you just met with the leadership to try and make your veto of the Bosnia arms embargo lifting stick. But in the event that it doesn't, and not knowing as we speak what the size of the margin is going to be, what's the next step? What else would you look to do?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, whatever the vote is, we still might sustain a veto. But I was encouraged by a few people who told me that they had decided on reflection that it was not the thing to do now. The Rapid Reaction Force, after all, is showing some strength there. And I would remind you that the only thing that has ever worked in the last two and a half years is when the Bosnian Serbs thought the United Nations would permit NATO and the Americans

who are working with NATO to use air power to stop the aggression so that there would have to be a negotiated settlement. And in the last several days, the last couple of weeks in Gorazde, you know, we've gotten five convoys through; there has been no assault on it.

And I think that this new strategy will work if we can hammer out a negotiated settlement and there's a new effort there. So I believe that is the best strategy. I've said it all along, and I haven't changed my position. I'm going to try to see that position prevail.

Q Mr. President, on both the ongoing hearings, Waco and Whitewater, are you convinced and can you say for the record that everything that is going to come out is out vis-a-vis where you stand in the White House and your policy decisions on both?

THE PRESIDENT: As far as I know -- we have not added anything new to what was already known, but as far as I know we have been totally forthcoming and have said everything there is to be said on it.

Q Mr. President, can you tell us, first of all, why you want to veto the telecommunications bill? I understand that you're concerned about concentration of media power. And in regard to that, can you comment on the merger yesterday between ABC and Walt Disney and the proposed merger that may happen today between CBS and Westinghouse, and whether you see this concentration of power happening?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I think, first of all, you have to take -- on these mergers, under our law and as a matter of economics, you have to take them case by case and analyze them. And all I know about the proposed mergers is what I read this morning when I woke up. So I can't comment on that.

I do think it would be an error to set up a situation in the United States where one person could own half the television stations in the country or half the media outlets. And we don't have a fairness doctrine anymore and we don't have -- particularly if we took the federal government out of -- all the federal agencies out of any kind of maintenance of competition or maintenance of competitive environment by taking the Justice Department out of it, for example.

I would remind you that we have the most successful telecommunications operations in the world partly because we have had the proper balance between a highly competitive environment and an openness to new forces and new technologies and new entries in it from all around the world.

I want very badly to sign a telecommunications bill. We tried to pass one, this administration did, during the last session of Congress. One of the interest groups affected by this great drama that's unfolding in the telecommunications area prevented, through its supporters in the Senate, prevented the bill from passing in the last session of Congress. I hope we can get it, but we want to get it right.

The Vice President has done a lot of work on this over the years. He and I have talked about this at great length. And we are -- we have negotiated in good faith with the Congress to try to get it right. We want very much to sign a bill. We believe it will be good for the American economy and good for the American consumers if it's the right kind of bill. So we'll keep working on it.

Thank you.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

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11:31 A.M. EDT